KESHAB CHANDRA
AND
RAMKRISHNA

Flag of Navavidhan
(New Dispensation)

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(New Dispensation)

G. C. BANERJI
(Retired District and Sessions Judge)

SECOND EDITION
1942

NAVAVIDHAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE
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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Reading recent comments on the life and work of Keshab Chandra Sen, it was borne in upon me that a statement correcting some wilful and some ignorant misrepresentations thereof, was urgently needed. It was an onerous task at this time of life—well-nigh three score years and ten—and there was the diffidence about my abilities and qualifications. Still the effort had to be made as the inner voice kept me continually uneasy till it set my hands to the work. The only course left to me was to study the relevant literature and consult fellow-students conversant with it, and appeal to eye-witnesses still left with us (some of whom passed away short time ago) to come to my assistance. One of them the late Rev. Promotho Loll Sen could not complete his statement before his sad death (June 30, 1930) though his oral help and guidance were considerable.

Of all the testimonies, Keshab's own utterances as found in his auto-biographical sermons entitled the 'Jeevan Veda', have been in recent times assuming such an immense importance for students of religious experience that other testimonies appear to be of less significance. That is the reason why translation of three chapters from the 'Jeevan Veda' has been included in this book.

The statements of witnesses with personal knowledge reproduced in this book (Chapter V and portion of Chapter VI)* have been taken from diverse sources.

* Chapter VII of this Edition.

The independent evidence (Chapter VI)* of Mr. N. N. Ghosh, F.R.S.L., London, Bar-at-Law (Editor, 'Indian Nation' and Principal, Metropolitan Institution, Calcutta), is significant inasmuch as he was a representative of a Hindu religious group (Radhaswami Satsang) which instead of going out of the orthodox pale, tries to reform Hinduism from within, in however small scale that may be. The last but one statement made by Bhai Promotho Loll Sen † is of unique significance for all who claim fellowship with the Navavidhan group, because it was the last statement about Ramkrishna that he made in writing while he was staying at Allahabad in 1929-30 prior to his departure to Calcutta to participate in the *utsav* celebrations there—the Navavidhan Jubilee *utsav* along with which was celebrated the centenary of the Brahmo Samaj established in 1830. In this connection, I would like to point out that for years Bhai Promotho Loll would celebrate the passing away of the sage of Dakshineshwar with *upasana* (devotions), *kirtan* (enthusiastic singing) and *alochana* (discourses). It was he who gave the date a place in the Bhadrotsav programme of the Navavidhan Mandali—the Church of the New Dispensation.

Among those who have rendered me valuable assistance in many ways I should mention specially Dr. Satyananda Roy and Dr. Bimal Chandra Ghosh. I also got some help from Rev. Jamini Kanta Koar, Dr. Girindra Shekhar Basu, Mr. Satyendranath Roy, Mr. Ananta Kumar Sen and others. To them all I owe a considerable debt of gratitude.

* Chapter VII of this Edition.

† Chapter VI of this Edition.

Finally, I beg my readers to pay careful, impartial and unbiassed attention to the following pages and request them to take note of the Message of the Age—Navavidhan—and seek the teachings of the Indwelling Spirit. If my criticism of the critics of Keshab is sometimes put strongly, even harshly, I crave indulgence on the ground that emphatic language is often required to express indignation at unfairness and injustice.

GYAN KUTIR,
ALLAHABAD:
November, 1931.

G. C. BANERJI

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The Navavidhan Publication Committee found it necessary to bring out a revised edition of "Keshab Chandra and Ramkrishna" and kindly undertook the work, for which the author is indebted to the Committee.

For weak eyesight it was not possible for the author to do any proof-reading. Prof. K. S. Ghosh, Mr. Nirmal Chandra Sinha and some other friends kindly revised the book and looked through the proofs. Without their help it would not have been possible to bring out this edition. The author is extremely grateful to all these gentlemen, and also to the Rev. Bhai A. K. Lodh and Mr. Sati Kumar Chatterji for their cooperation in the publication of this book.

In this edition the text has been revised in some places, additional footnotes and new materials have been put in, and some portions which were considered unnecessary have been omitted. The Notes of the late Rev. Bhai P. L. Sen which were included in Chapter V of the previous edition form a separate chapter (viz., Chapter VI) in this edition.

M. Romain Rolland's letter (in French) which he wrote to the author, on receipt of a copy of the first edition of this book, with its English translation, is given at the end of this book.

GYAN KUTIR,
ALLAHABAD
January 1942.

G. C. BANERJI

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INTRODUCTION

A statement placing before the public the true spiritual relationship that subsisted between the God-intoxicated Soul Paramhansa Ramkrishna and Samanvaya-Acharya Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen has long been overdue. This narrative is from the pen of one who holds both of these great men in the highest estima-tion. They are dear to him, but truth is dearest of all, and it is this compelling sense of truth that has led him to make these statements, to dispel illusions and combat half-truths and falsehoods that have grown round the sweet relationship that subsisted between these voyagers of the unchartered ocean of spirituality. We have not taken in hand this publication in an offensive spirit but on the contrary we are on the defensive. We belong to the *Navavidhan*. We cannot call a human being God, nor even a *guru,* nor a mediator. We seek light from Heaven only, and do not accept any human judgment in respect of spiritual matter as final. We are dead against idolatry in every shape. No one, we challenge, can point out anybody amongst us who would worship a human being or his image or picture in the way an orthodox Hindu would worship his gods. We have no desire to lionise or to belittle anybody, but are ready to give every-one his due. But when it is found that mischief-makers are out, and assertions are made by story-tellers, without any regard for truth, it is no longer possible to remain silent. Occasionally some of us pointed out these untruths and for this fault of theirs they were strongly

criticised, unfairly chastised and ridiculed. But we, however, can no longer remain silent when we see the propensity of broadcasting false stories in India and outside India, specially in America, taking advantage of ignorance of the people there about our country, and also find misrepresentation of facts and passing off untruths for truths in order to magnify Ramkrishna or belittle Keshab. We must, therefore, place the sheer facts before the public.

Moreover, fairness requires that facts and facts only, without distortions, be given out for the information and enlightenment of our young generation as well as of future generations.

There are still men amongst us who were in constant contact with both Keshab and Ramkrishna, from a time when the latter had no disciples. Those men are truthful men and not story-tellers or propagandists. Statements of some of them have been collected and those form a separate chapter in this book. Too much misrepresentation calls for a serious protest. Pandit Shastri's misstatements in his "History of the Brahmo Samaj" called for Prof. Dutt's "Behold the Man."

We, of the *Navavidhan* Church, yield to none in having a genuine love, regard and respect for the saintly soul Ramkrishna Paramhansa. Interested persons and misinformed persons in America and Europe may level their unmerited remarks against us, without attempting to get first-hand and genuine information. Unfortunately, most of our literature is in Bengali. These foreign critics before wielding their pen, should have tried to get some idea of these records in Bengali ; and should not have placed too much reliance on interested

persons and on those who themselves had no knowledge whatsoever, or who derived their so-called and second-hand knowledge from the story-tellers and have themselves made most absurd statements. One of them, Dhan Gopal Mukerjee, even goes so far as to say that Keshab Chandra sought Ramkrishna's acquaintance after hearing about Ramkrishna from Pratap Chandra Mazumdar. This is not even the story of the Ramkrishnaites in India.

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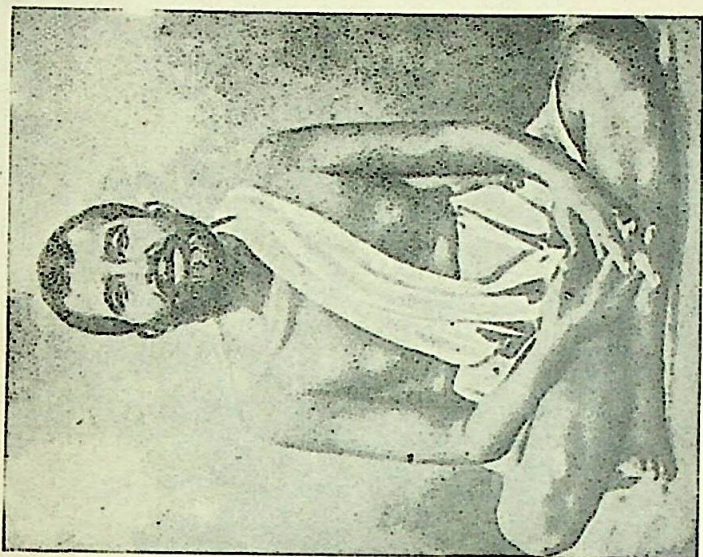

KESHAB

RAMKRISHNA

Two Saintly Souls

None Guru of the other—Each benefited by the other.

CHAPTER I

THE MEETING OF KESHAB CHANDRA AND RAMKRISHNA

In March 1875, Ramkrishna and Keshab for the first time came to be acquainted with each other. It was wrongly reported to Prof. Max Muller by Narendra Nath Dutt (Vivekananda) that their meeting took place in 1866. There might have been some object for giving this wrong date. Though Vivekananda admittedly was not present at this meeting, it was not likely that he was not aware of the correct date.

The report of this first meeting appeared in the "Indian Mirror" of the 28th March, 1875, only a few days after the meeting. It runs thus:

"We met one (a sincere Hindu devotee) not long ago and were charmed by the depth, penetration and simplicity of his spirit. The never-ceasing metaphors and analogies in which he indulged, are most of them as apt as they are beautiful. The characteristics of his mind are the very opposite to those of Pandit Dayananda Saraswati, the former being so gentle, tender and contemplative, as the latter is sturdy, masculine and polemical. Hinduism must have in it a deep sense of beauty, truth and goodness to inspire such men as these."

Probably the correct date is 15th March, 1875, as given in the books of Swami Saradananda, Romain Rolland and others of the Ramkrishna Mission and

their allies, and there is no reason to dispute about this date.

The earliest record of the life and teachings of Paramhansa Ramkrishna is to be found in the publications of Keshab's section of the Brahmo Samaj. Ramkrishna went, accompanied by his nephew Hridoy, to meet Keshab who was reported to have seen God face to face. It happened in a suburban garden, at Belgharia, which was the spiritual retreat of Keshab and his missionaries, on or about the 15th March, 1875. Keshab and his party were staying there for the purpose of *Sadhan* (spiritual exercises). "There came one morning in a *thicca ghari* a disorderly-looking young man insufficiently clad and with manners less than insufficient; who was introduced as Ramkrishna of Dakshineswar." Ramkrishna was then one of the millions of *sannyasis* to be found in Bengal and all over India. Keshab on the other hand by that time was a man of world-wide reputation.

It was quite natural for Ramkrishna to make Keshab's acquaintance. Ramkrishna from before had a very high opinion about Keshab. More than ten years before their first meeting, and while Keshab was still in the Calcutta (Adi) Samaj, Ramkrishna came to attend the Divine Service in that Samaj and there observed to his nephew Hridoy that Keshab's 'float had sunk deep,' meaning thereby that Keshab's mind had sunk deep into God.

"M." (Babu Mahendra Nath Gupta) was introduced to Ramkrishna by Mr. Nagendra Nath Gupta as late as 1882. He joined the Ramkrishna party some time after, probably in 1884. He, as far as could be ascertained,

was the first amongst Ramkrishna's disciples, to bring out books regarding the latter, under the name "Ramkrishna Kathamrita" in four volumes. The first part of the first volume was published on 1st Falgun 1308 (February 13, 1902). An English version of it named "Gospel of Ramkrishna" has since been published.

The late Mr. Mahesh Chandra Ghosh, a veteran member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, reviewed this English version. He noted that 'in fact the belief is current in many quarters that the Ramkrishna as depicted by "M." is not the real Ramkrishna, but the Ramkrishna of "M."—a revised, modified, expurgated and magnified version of the real Ramkrishna. But when sectarian and doctrinal questions arise we should accept the facts with caution.'

It is an adverse criticism, a reply to which was given by Swami Nikhilananda. Mr. Ghosh gave a rejoinder to the Swami's observations. Though the rejoinder was in the form of short and brief sentences, it was most effective and his position remains unassailed.

All these will be found in the February and April numbers of the *Modern Review* of 1930. It is an interesting study and will repay the labour.

We are unable to accept all the stories and statements contained in these, as well as in all Ramkrishna-Vivekananda literature, as facts. Our brethren of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement get annoyed if we call all these "story-tellers' stories," but any unbiased reader will agree with us. These works are really full of the "story-tellers' stories" the annoyance of our brethren notwithstanding. A spade must be called a spade.

Our apostolic chronicler Upadhyay Gour Gobind Roy

and other fellow workers of Keshab have not only recorded the first meeting of Keshab and Paramhansa but other subsequent meetings with such a wealth and accuracy of details that the devout student of history, instead of being left to sift the truth from such story-tellings as are found in the works of 'M.' from the Kankurgachi literature and other later pious yarns of the same type, may get all the materials in an unalloyed state. Some of the authors of these literatures have taken recourse to very clever tactics by showing a little fairness in certain matters, thereby securing confidence of the public and a reputation for fairness and thereby to create an opportunity to pass off a huge mass of manufactured stories and untruths as truths and facts. From almost the moment of the meeting the two noble souls began to love and respect each other. Keshab and his party went many a time to see the Hindu saint who in return often used to come to the residence of Keshab in Calcutta with greatest eagerness.

It was only a few years before his death that Ramkrishna gathered some disciples around him, and the latter, in order to extol their Master, indulged in misrepresentations, exaggerations and distortions of facts. Even Ramkrishna himself did not like the spirit of his disciples, and his disciples knew it.

MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

Before March 1875 Keshab, admittedly, did not know Ramkrishna. Ramkrishna's principal disciple Mr. Narendra Nath Dutta (Vivekananda), however, gave wrong information to Prof. Max Muller about the date. He named the year 1866 instead of 1875. Was there, we

wonder, some ulterior motive for doing so? He was himself a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj even in 1882 and he used to frequent Keshab's place also. He had every opportunity to know when Ramkrishna and Keshab first met. Similarly he had opportunities to know that the ideas of Motherhood of God and New Dispensation were not new to the Brahmo Samaj and we know that they existed even long before 1875. By setting back the date to 1866 there was a good chance of the people living several thousands miles away from India being easily duped to believe that the utterances of Keshab prior to 1875 and since 1866 were due to his contact with Paramhansa. In this attempt, however, he was not successful. Be that as it may, since the admitted date of the meeting (1875) the relation between Keshab and Paramhansa, day by day, became very friendly. Later on it has been admitted that Keshab made Ramkrishna known to the public and brought him out from obscurity. Both of them were noble and genuine *Bhaktas*. It is sheer foolishness to try to make out that the one was superior to the other.

Unfortunately there has been a persistent attempt for nearly half a century to make out that whatever good there was in the Brahmo Samaj and in Keshab, every particle of it was due to Keshab's contact with Ramkrishna (*vide* the later publications of the Ramkrishna Mission and allied bodies). They would even go so far as to put an absurd statement in the mouth of the late Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar. Mr. Saradananda, the author of *Sri Sri Ramkrishna Lila Prasanga,* wrote to the effect that Pratap Chandra and all the Brahmos were mere *goondas* before their contact with Ramkrishna in

1875—were engaged in only "ruffianism." In other words the Brahmos, necessarily including Maharshi Debendra Nath, did not know the A B C of religion and spiritual culture. It is certain that Pratap Chandra did not say so. He was incapable even of using such language. None of the Brahmos ever heard of it. The Brahmo literature prior to 1875, if we are to believe Mr. Saradananda, must have consisted of books on the science of *Goondaism* (ruffianism) and the utterances of Maharshi Debendra Nath downwards from the Brahmo Samaj pulpits were instructions on ruffianism! No reasonable man can accept Mr. Saradananda's story as true—it is purely a manufactured article. This is one of the innumerable similar stories which fill the pages of several Ramkrishna-Vivekananda publications. One of their stories is that Keshab and the Brahmo Samaj borrowed the idea of Motherhood of God from Ramkrishna. We shall presently examine this point.

Mr. Satyendra Nath Mazumdar, the biographer of Vivekananda—in his "Vivekananda Charit" * in Bengali, on pages 60-61, says that in the New Dispensation Church Keshab Chandra following the example of Ramkrishna introduced the name "Mother" for God and proceeded to worship God as Mother, but the missionaries of that Samaj all along denied that Keshab got the idea of worshipping God as Mother from Paramhansa. He then gives a rebuke in an ironical tone and reminds them that one of their own missionaries the late Rev. Giris Chandra Sen made some admissions in this matter and, in support of that, quotes a passage from the *Dharmatattwa* of 1st Aswin, 1808 (wrongly given as

* The Edition which was being sold in 1931.

1809) *Shak*. This passage has been given within inverted commas. So we at first thought that it contains verbatim what was actually in the *Dharmatattwa*. On examining it closely, however, we find that the passage has undergone distortions. In it the word *Shiksha* has been introduced as a purposive interpolation. This changes the meaning of the passage altogether. This matter has been dealt with in another place in this book.

The conception of the Motherhood of God is not a new thing to the Hindus. Even before Ramkrishna was born the Hindus used to worship God as Mother. There were good many *Shaktas* in Bengal a century ago. The most popular hymns of *Bhakta* Ramprasad Sen were known to the members of every Hindu family in Bengal. The conception of Motherhood of God was introduced in the Brahmo Samaj from the time of Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore. The hymns and sermons of that time abound in this idea of Motherhood of God. Let us now investigate since when Keshab Chandra is addressing God as Mother.

First Meeting of Keshab and Ramkrishna on March 15, 1875

1862—At the Calcutta (Adi) Brahmo Samaj in his sermon of *23rd January, 1862*, Keshab addressed God as Mother. (Acharyer Upadesh, Vol, I, pp. 3 and 8.)

On the same day in his prayer he addressed God as Mother. (Bengali Prayers, p. 2, Centenary Edition of 1939, Part I.)

1863—On *18th April, 1863*, Keshab in his lecture,

Brahmo Samaj Vindicated said, "Thus Brahmoism not only reveals God to me but He Whom I worship is my Father and Mother and Saviour. * * Can the mind conceive anything more awful than ingratitude to the Beneficent Father Who is the Life of our life, Who supports us on His everlasting arms, Who clothes and feeds us with more than a father's care, with more than a *mother's* tenderness?" (K. C. Sen's Lectures, Indian Edition, second edition of 1893, Part II, at page 63. Also Lectures in India—English Edition, Vol. II, at pp. 200 and 201.)

1865—On *23rd January, 1865,* at the Adi Samaj (35th anniversary day) Keshab addresses God as Father and Mother. (Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. I, at p. 12.)

1866—In the Brahmo Text Book *Siksha Sangraha* we find—"Oh Thou Mother Divine, bind me with Thy mercies... Oh Mother, who will cure my pain?"

1868—*May or June 1868.* Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. I, p. 47. "Mother cannot lend deaf-ear to son's cry."

1869—*15th December, 1869.* Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. I, p. 173, "Will you shun such a Father, such a Mother *(Janani)*?"

1870—*23rd January, 1870.* Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. I, p. 189, also *Maghotshab*, second edition, p. 89—"Oh Mother! Remove our misery. I shall plunge into Thine lap and shall be comforted...... So Mother extinguished the fire of my sorrow. She took me in her lap."

Vide also at pp. 208, 211, 212, Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. I—"Mother's Lap."

Vide also at p. 225—"... my Mother."

1870—*28th April, 1870*...... in his sermon at the Unity Church, Islington, England, he said: "If we can love father and mother, surely we can love Him (God) who is the *Mother of mothers* and the *Father of fathers*." (K. C. Sen in England, Third Edition p. 151.)

1871—*23rd July, 1871*. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, p. 176. "When I enter the inner recesses of the heart, leaving behind all the mundane things, I see the same Mother of mothers and Father of fathers showing Her truths and love therein, etc."

1872—*27th January, 1872*. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 53—"Why should they be unhappy whose Mother is all-blissful. Being so near, so affectionate a Mother, why do you go back out of despair?"

28th April, 1872. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 129—"Within the sister you will find the touch of the endless affections of the Supreme Mother."

5th May, 1872. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 136—"No one's name is so dear, as the name of the Supreme Mother."

25th June, 1872. Prayers, (Centenary Edition, Part I, at p. 80), "Thine (God) motherliness which exists in the heart of the womankind."

30th June, 1872. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 188—"Father...Mother."

1873—*26th January, 1873.* Acharya Keshab Chandra, (Centenary Edition, p. 1026)—Sermon for the Brahmo ladies:

"Not seeing Her daughters in Her house, the Mother in Heaven thought that some enemies have enticed them away and chained them, or some demons by their hypnotising powers have engaged them as their slaves, or they having lost their eyesight, have fallen into some well."

2nd February, 1873. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. IV, p. 69—"Mother wishes that we shall be happy."

2nd February, 1873. Lecture "Future Life" Lectures in India, Vol. II, p. 328, (English Edition), Keshab says:

"We depend upon God in every act of our life—and we, therefore, call Him our Father and Mother."

15th March, 1873. K. C. Sen's Lectures in India, (Eng. Ed.), Vol II, p. 352:

"We live in God, we shall live in Him throughout eternity. He is our eternal Father and Mother and it is His business to supply us for ever with the necessaries of life."

14th August 1873. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. V, p. 16—"Calling God sometimes as Father, and sometimes as Mother, our mind is exceedingly satisfied."

2nd October, 1873. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. V, p. 69—"Mother of mothers."

1874—*23rd January, 1874.* Sermon for Ladies, Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. V, p. 138—"But who is your Father and Mother."

1st March, 1874. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. V, p. 201—"Those who can call God their Mother, their Father." This sermon contains numerous other passages in which the word 'Mother' occurs.

4th March, 1874. Daily Bengali Prayers, Bharat Ashram, (Centenary Edition, Vol. I, p. 115)—"Now I find that as much as we call you Mother, Father, so much we are happy."

6th March, 1874. Daily Bengali Prayers, Bharat Ashram, (Centenary Edition, Vol. I, p. 119)—"You involve us in difficulties, so that we may escape calamity by accosting you Mother."

19th March, 1874. Bengali Prayers, Brahmo Somaj of India, pp. 40-41, (Centenary Edition, Vol. I, p. 146)—"O Merciful God, who will accost you Mother if the sisters do not come to you?"

"Bless us in such a way that all the sisters accepting this Dispensation and accosting Thee Mother will resign their very lives into Thine hands."

21st March, 1874. Daily Bengali Prayers, Bharat Ashram, Vol. II, p. 74, (Centenary Edition, Vol. I, p. 149)—"O Loving and Merciful Lord, our eternal Father, Mother,......"

8th November, 1874. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. VI, p. 80,—"We call God, Father......Mother."

26th December, 1874. Daily Bengali Prayers, Bharat Ashram, Vol. II, p. 126 (Centenary Edn. Vol. I, p. 222)—"Thou art that Blissful Mother."

1875—*24th January, 1875.* Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. VI, pp. 123, 124 and 125.

"Mother, Mother, today we do not..."
"As Mother Thou art teaching us."
"O Beautiful and Loving Mother..."
25th January, 1875. Bengali Prayers, Brahmo Samaj of India, pp. 65—67. (Centenary Edition, Vol. I, pp. 232—234) "O, Loving Mother, affectionate Father, Mother..."
"......calling Thee Mother, be happy."
"So am I calling Thee Mother, come near me..."
"O, Thou the Mother of the motherless, and Mother of all the brothers and sisters..."

25th January, 1875. Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. VI, pp. 134—141:
"......whose daughter are you? If you do not see the Mother then you are motherless."
"What sort of Mother have we......"
"Call her Mother for all eternity."
"If you do not see the Mother, your misery would not cease."
"One who has not seen the Mother has become just like a mad man."
"If you insult my Mother......"
"O, Thou Loving Mother, Loving Father, Mother, how poor they are who have not seen Thee."
"Bless Thy Bengal daughters that they may see Thee, and call Thee Mother and rejoice and be happy."
"O, Thou Mother of the motherless, and Mother of all the brothers and sisters."
6th March, 1875. Bengali Prayers, Bharat Ashram, Part I, p. 35, (Centenary Edition, Part I, p. 119) "Shall be safe by calling Thee Mother."

Let us remind the reader that the first meeting of Keshab and Ramkrishna took place on or about the *15th March, 1875*.

The above quotations will show that the idea of Motherhood of God was in Keshab's mind so far back as 1862. If one carefully read the ten volumes of Acharyer Upadesh (Minister's Sermons in Bengali), and Daily Prayers in Bharat Ashram and Brahmo Samaj of India, and also other Brahmo literature of the period in question, he will find the gradual development in Keshab of the conception of God as Mother. We would invite the attention of the readers specially to the Prayer of 25th January, 1875, which was offered about two months before Keshab came to know Ramkrishna. It is quite probable Ramkrishna came to meet Keshab on hearing the report of this prayer. It will be found what developed stage Keshab's realisation of the Motherhood of God had reached even at the time. To these if the unreported prayers and sermons and talks of Keshab could be added, the evidence would be voluminous.

Even a cursory glance at the quotations given above will show how the revelation of God's Motherhood, beginning as a swiftly passing vision, documentally admitted by him as having been received by him through Maharshi Debendranath in his article of 1st July, 1865, in the *Indian Mirror*, across the hitherto undisturbed consciousness of God as Father, came to be coupled together as the hyphenated Father-Mother, then gradually gaining the ascendancy and intimacy into *Janani*, Mother and *Ma*, at last burst forth into the fully developed doctrine of the Motherhood of God—of God as World-Mother, the Mother Eternal! And all these happened before

Ramkrishna appeared on the scene, before Keshab and his fellow-believers, or for that matter even the Hindu world knew anything by repute, of that *Shakta* recluse of Dakshineshwar who was made known to Hindu as well as to others through Keshab and the Brahmo Samaj later on.

Myth-making and propaganda have come to be a favourite pastime with those who, in their frantic attempts to exalt and rehabilitate their special brand of orthodoxy, are prompted to vilify and deprecate every form and shade of heterodoxy. In season and out of season it is dinned into our ears from pulpit, platform and press that heterodoxy has nothing new and original in itself, pluming itself more or less, on borrowed feathers. It is on this 'borrowing business' that the myth-makers rear their whole fabric of misrepresentation. It is a very interesting and profitable study showing what proportion fiction bears to the so-called orthodox facts in these myth-making experiments. We recommend to the thoughtful readers to study carefully the Navavidhan literature, from the very beginning side by side with the shipload of the publications of the Ramkrishna Mission Company, including the Bengali and English Epistles of Vivekananda, and to form their own fair and independent judgment. We are not propagandists in the ordinary sense of the term ; on the contrary, we hate propaganda. Our only concern is that truth should be told. There should be absolutely no distortions, purposive alterations, interpolations, ascribing one's things to another, and attempts to give out that all the good things there are in the Brahmo Samaj had their origin in Ramkrishna. There should be no belittling of

anybody, nor should one be denied his just dues. We want nothing more. But nowadays it has become a sort of fashionable infection to have recourse to all these. This disease has affected our Brahmo Samaj even in the matter of Keshab's personality.

Whatever else might have come to Keshab from his fellowship with Ramkrishna, so far as the doctrine of God's Motherhood is concerned it is a direct revelation of God to meet the hunger of Mother-love in Keshab's heart. But behind the hunger there certainly lay the age-long subconscious influences—domestic, social and national. A native of Bengal of Ramprasad Sen and other *Shakta* devotees, born of pious *Vaishnava* parents, cradled in Calcutta containing the far-famed Kali shrine of Kalighat, Keshab lived and moved in an atmosphere saturated with the conception of God as Mother. At home his devotion to his incomparable mother Sarada Devi with her marvellous faith in her saintly son, must have added a new flavour and dimension to Keshab's consciousness of God-love.

Then his pilgrimage to England, his personal acquaintance with the best traditions of the late Victorian English family life, as well as the new role of teacher, doctor, nurse, social worker and missionary played by the women of the West—all served to contribute new elements to his conception of ideal womanhood. All these were building up within him a new vision of God and Womanhood. And when in his efforts to improve the social and spiritual life of Indian womanhood he realised that only the presentation of God as the Perfection of Womanhood—as the World-Mother—could be the one undying ideal of women, Keshab gave expression to it

in his challenging sermon—"Behold the World-Mother" (*Jagat Janani ke dekho*) delivered at the Brahmo Ladies' gathering (Brahmica Samaj) on 25th January, 1875, during the Maghotsav, more than six weeks before he first saw Ramkrishna in the Belgharia garden. The year 1875 is also memorable as bringing in the idea of Dispensation—the New Dispensation in that inspiring address "Behold the Light of Heaven in India" (23rd January, 1875), thus linking up the two—Motherhood and Dispensation—in one indissoluble revelation."

We repeat that all this, as has already been said, happened before Ramkrishna and Keshab met for the first time, so that Ramkrishna had nothing to do with what happened before March 1875.

We are not in a position to say anything about the mysterious occult influences at work on Keshab which may make the "borrowing" a theosophic fact though not a historic one. The *milieu* of synthesising Hinduism, into which both Ramkrishna and Keshab were born and in which they both grew, was potent enough to affect their natures and make them kindred souls. The very name 'Ramkrishna,' given by his *Shakta* parents to the priest of Dakshineshwar, signifies the reconciliation of two schools of Hindu thought, Shaiva and Vaishnava, that existed in their minds, while 'Keshab' was the name of the author of the Gita, the *Samanvaya* Acharya of Ancient India, who synthesised the paths of *Yoga*, *Bhakti*, *Karma* and *Jnan*.

We could have extended the period of Keshab's freedom from Ramkrishna's influence a few months more after the first meeting, for a closer intimacy with, and a fuller knowledge of, the *Shakta* devotee who came much

later. But it is not necessary. However, the fellowship of Ramkrishna, like other consecrated fellowships in Keshab's life, brought in its peculiar blessings. In his autobiographical sermons (The Jeevan Veda), Keshab while dwelling on his *shishya prakriti*, (the trait of the disciple in him), says: "No one has ever approached this life without contributing to it. God has endowed my spirit with such power that the moment I draw near a saintly soul I imbibe his goodness. I can feel distinctly when the saintly soul leaves my presence that he has poured his virtues into my life. I seem, in some measure, to become like him." He also on numerous occasions, and from the beginning to the last day of his life, emphatically said that none but God was his Master and Guru. He hated *guruism* and mediatorship. He used to rebuke those who happened to show him more respect than could be shown to a friend. It is an absurd story to tell that Ramkrishna was his *guru*. In order to support this false story many myths and concoctions were necessary. Many sayings were manufactured alleging their origin to Ramkrishna Paramhansa without taking into consideration that the latter's position would be compromised thereby. For Ramkrishna, like Keshab, was a great hater of *guruism*.

Now the question is: What was the most significant fruit of this memorable union of the two saintly souls, which remained unimpaired till the last? There is one thing which we must bear in mind here. During the whole course of their fellowship there was never any idea of the one teaching or preaching to the other, either in private or in public, however much the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda School may say to the contrary and

manufacture stories to substantiate their propaganda. Both Keshab and Ramkrishna gloried in each other's companionship and were blessed abundantly.

A closer study of the Bengali Sermons of Keshab week after week, will reveal the gradual development of the many ideas and ideals which have left their impress on the history of the Brahmo Samaj. It will show wherein his beliefs approximated to the traditional tenets of the world-religions and wherein they differed from them, making his position as the Apostle of the Navavidhan unique. For a fuller understanding of the doctrine of the Motherhood of God in the Navavidhan, during the closing years of Keshab's life, we need a special study and separate treatment of that period. Such a study will convince us what justification there can be in the 'borrowing' of the Motherhood doctrine by Keshab. Upadhyaya Gour Gobinda Roy has pointed out (Acharya Keshab Chandra, Centenary Edition, Vol. II, pp. 1043—44) the difference between the Motherhood conception as held by an ordinary *Shakta* and that held by Ramkrishna. The former considered himself a "Bhairab" and his goddess *Shakti* as "Bhairabi", so that in that relation the difference of sex and the *libido* of sex received prominence. While Ramkrishna cultivated the relation of a child to a mother and emphasised the parental relation and ascribed a sublimated maternal instinct to his *Kali*. We should point out that the *Shakta* worships *Shakti*—"Force" or "Energy", conceived as *feminine*—that is to say, a productive and begetting power and not merely as a transforming activity. The fascination and attraction that the female has for the male at once enters the idea of *Shakti* when it is

personified as woman. And a begetting woman is a mother. The well-known opinion of Ramkrishna that woman and wealth are deterrents in the path of religion is evidence of his departure from ordinary *Shakta* cult.

The Christian Madonna is the human mother rearing a Divine Child and represents the maternal instinct sublimated in the woman to a divine expression. This doctrine of a human instinct directed to Heaven, has its parallel in the "Balgopal" relation of Krishna and Jasoda. Keshab's conception of the Motherhood of God was not only based upon the sublimation of the filial instinct (like that of Ramkrishna) and parental instinct (like that of the Christian Madonna) but upon the entire and eternal dependence of the inborn child to the mother upon the direction of all the instincts to the Divine Mother and the sublimation of the social instinct (herd instinct) leading to the Beatific Vision of the Mother and Her family. (Read "God Vision in the Nineteenth Century",—Keshab's Lectures in India, Vol. I.)

The eclecticism of Ramkrishna's Hindu gods and goddesses was not a strange thing to Keshab. B. Mazoomdar, brother-in-law of Keshab, used to attend meetings both in the Brahma Mandir and at Keshab's house (Colutola house and Lily Cottage) pretty regularly, and consequently is to be regarded as more reliable than any of the others. In 1874 Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar was away in Europe, and did not have opportunity of witnessing the commencement of the new *Sadhan* (in 1874) and the new expositions of *Yoga, Bhakti, Karma, Jnan*, to the selected disciples, which involved discussion on the attributes of God and their correlation to Hindu gods and goddesses. B. Mazoomdar at pages

26-27 of his book, "Max Muller on Ramkrishna" says: "It appears Mr. (P. C.) Mazoomdar here also forgot to see that his master Keshab a year and some months before his acquaintance with Ramkrishna, took up the Hindu gods and goddesses by the names such as Shiva, Shakti, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Hari, etc., and explained the attributes that underlay them."

In his "A Passing Sketch on Keshab Chandra Sen" in the "Christian Register," Rev. P. C. Mazoomdar himself said: "Keshab began in 1875, * a fresh course of deep spiritual culture. ... ... To some disciples he recommended *Bhakti* or absorbed love of God, to others he recommended *Jnan* or the study of divine wisdom and philosophy, and to others he allotted the discipline of *Seva* or the service of the fellowmen." Keshab began to do this from the 1st January, 1875, and when the disciples were fit for classifications, he initiated them openly and his charges in that connection (exhortations) commenced from the beginning of 1876. Those will be found in his well-known and most valuable "Brahmo-gitopanishat". †

In this 'Gitopanishat', amongst others we find the following:

"SHIVAM is the attribute of God from which Bhakti

* Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar sets down in 1876 the meeting of Ramkrishna and Keshab. In his mind, therefore, this date 1875 means *a year before* the meeting. If we connect the former date to 1875 the latter obviously becomes 1874.

† It is quite reasonable to suppose (and therefore to agree with B. Mazoomdar) that the allotment of special cultures was preceded by a cultivation of Hindu thoughts and Hindu *sadhans*.

begins, we should offer our love to Him, the Shiva, the Good."

"Lord! Thou art SHAKTI (Power); these hands are strengthened by Thy power. O God! Thou art the wisdom, science, etc. O Thou SARASWATI, enter into me! The least of wisdom that I have is Thine...... I have the Vedas, the Smriti, and the Shastras that have come out from the mouth of Saraswati (the Giver of Wisdom)."

"The great God holding in one hand the *Kamandalu* for the ascetics, and in the other the grains, etc., is LAKSHMI (the Goddess of Beauty and Happiness). Oh, blessed am I, I have given up all my earthly happiness and have resolved to do good to others. I have been immersed deep in the Great Goddess Lakshmi."

"O Thou pupil of *Bhakti*, tell me thrice the name HARI, the Beauty. This name will save you and others."

The devout amongst the orthodox Hindus will read in it a new ring not present in orthodox interpretations of idol worship. SHIVAM is the Destroyer of the Hindu Trinity and not the inspirer of *Bhakti*. And SHAKTI is Nature, not giver of strength to the philanthropist's elbow. And LAKSHMI is the Goddess of the banker and the merchant and the householder, not that of inspirer of a 'George Muller' of India. And all this teaching was the culmination of disciplines and realisations extending from before 1st January, 1875, and carried on throughout the year up to 1st January, 1876, when the "charge" is given to the disciples.

Keshab was never chary in giving credit where credit

was due, and he was the last person to withhold the name of master and teacher from Ramkrishna or anyone else from whom he had received inspiration, encouragement or instruction.* But Keshab never said that he learnt anything in particular from Ramkrishna, or that he made Ramkrishna his *guru*. Certainly he said such things as this: "Whoever he may be I desire to learn from him. If I see an ordinary minstrel I love to learn at his feet. If an ascetic comes I consider that a lakh of rupees has come to my house. I learn much by listening to his hymns...... I can clearly perceive that whenever a saint takes leave of me, he pours into my heart his virtues. To some extent, I become like him. I am a born disciple."

He further said in his *Jeevan Veda*: "Every object is my teacher, every animal is my teacher, I learn even from the pigs and the like." And last of all he said: "God has implanted in me the power by which I can draw in the good qualities of every one." In his prayers, sermons and utterances he has said distinctly on innumerable occasions that he had no earthly teacher, but everything that he has said or done was by the direct inspiration from God. Keshab certainly drew in some good qualities of Ramkrishna but that did not make the latter his *guru*.

Just read what he says in his Bengali sermon of

* In a touching prayer offered for General Booth, Keshab said: "Mother, I have seen any number of thy saints, but I never admitted defeat before any of them; but I admit defeat now." We draw attention to this characteristic admission to our brethren of Ramkrishna movement for what it is worth.

October 22, 1871 (Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, pp. 265-66).

"From whatever source you come to learn any item of devotion do acknowledge it gratefully. But in so doing do not like an impostor and a thief; you cannot mince matters nor, hiding yourself, can identify yourself as a member of any sect.

"We live in the atmosphere of God, we enjoy God's things: any truth, any noble sentiment we get, we must respect it as coming from God. Truths are not the absolute property of any particular person, or any particular community...... God is our Guru. No man or community can be our Guru."

In his last letter to Prof. Max Muller in 1883, Keshab writes thus: "These twenty-five years the Holy Ghost has been to me not only Teacher and Guide, but also my Guardian and Protector. He has given me the bread of inspiration, and to His directions too I owe my daily bread. I never knew any Guru or priest, but in all matters affecting the higher life I have always sought and found light in the direct counsels of the Holy Spirit. ......How many times has He shown me the light of Heaven! or I would have perished. To so good a Spirit I look to as a personal Friend and daily Companion, and I have made up my mind never to turn away from Him to Whom I owe all that I prize in my temporal and spiritual life." (Life and Teachings. by Mozoomdar, Second Edition, pp. 161-162.)

We have given two quotations, one uttered four years before his meeting with Ramkrishna, the other penned the year before his death. Had Ramkrishna been his (Keshab's) *guru*, the man who suffered for Jesus and

Chaitanya, as Rolland and S. N. Shastri admit, would have said so. There could not have been any object in suppressing it. Keshab was the last person to be guilty of such suppression.

The disciples of Ramkrishna began to gather from 1881 and in a larger number from the middle of 1883 (*vide* Romain Rolland's Ramkrishna, Indian Edition, pp. 201-202 ; also Saradananda's "Life of Ramkrishna," Third Edition, pp. 59 and 294). "M" first appeared before Ramkrishna in 1882. It was most fortunate, no doubt, that in 1876 there were no disciples of Ramkrishna, otherwise we would have been presented with a story that when Keshab delivered his instructions and, injunctions to his *Yoga, Bhakti* and *Seva* disciples in 1876, he used to run to Ramkrishna every day to take lesson from him in order to utter the exhortations to Bijoy, Aghore, etc., as recorded in the 'Brahmogitopanishat', like the story given by "M" on page 117 of his "Kathamrita," Part II, *viz.*—"Heard that Keshab had accepted KALI (idol) before Thakur (Ramkrishna)"—which is so absurd on the face of it, that anyone possessing the smallest bit of common sense is bound to reject it. We are often charged with indulging in harsh criticism. The fact, however, is that we are never guilty of any unfairness, nor are we propagandists. We simply point out the absurdities, and the distortions, misrepresentations, suppressions, and purposive interpolations.

It appears that Ramkrishna Mission people do not really know what is the creed of the New Dispensation. They seem not to have understood the creed of Ramkrishna either, otherwise they would not make

him an *avatar* and worship his picture and image as of a god.

We are told at page 119 of M's Vol. II that Ramkrishna said that *he* did not understand what was meant by "Navavidhan." We wonder how he could teach it then to Keshab!

It appears that along with the genuine sayings of Ramkrishna many absurd and manufactured sayings have been mixed up and attempts have been made to pass them off as Ramkrishna's own.

Keshab, however, in his sermon on "Dis-comprehensible Navavidhan" (Sevaker Nivedan, Part IV, p. 50) says how and in what way Navavidhan is not easily comprehensible. He also, on several occasions, said that it may take several centuries to understand Navavidhan, but that it will be accepted by people ultimately.

Keshab who told, and sincerely told, all these things and led his life accordingly, would certainly have admitted Ramkrishna as his *guru* if he had been so. He was not a mean and ungrateful soul, and no coward either.

There is a world of difference between Keshab's conception of the Divine Mother and that of the Paramhansa. The former stuck to the motherhood of the Infinite and the latter did not eschew the limited sensuous image till the last.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW DISPENSATION

At the outset, in this chapter, it would be useful to give some idea of the religion of the Navavidhan. To do that within a short space the following quotations, to a certain extent, may serve the purpose:

NEW YEAR GREETINGS OF KESHAB CHANDRA SEN (JANUARY 1883)

Keshab Chandra Sen, a servant of God, called to be an apostle of the Church of the New Dispensation, which is in the holy city of Calcutta, the metropolis of Aryavarta.

To all the great nations in the world and to the chief religious sects in the East and the West,

To the followers of Moses, of Jesus, of Buddha, of Confucius, of Zoroaster, of Mohamed, of Nanak, and to the various branches of the Hindu Church,

To the saints and the sages, the bishops and the elders, the ministers and the missionaries of all these religious bodies:

Grace be unto you and peace everlasting.

Whereas sectarian discord and strife, schisms and enmities prevail in our Father's family, causing much bitterness and unhappiness, impurity and unrighteousness, and even war, carnage and bloodshed.

Whereas this setting of brother against brother and sister against sister in the name of religion has proved

a fruitful source of evils and is itself a sin against God and man.

It has pleased the Holy God to send unto the world a message of peace and love, of harmony and reconciliation.

This New Dispensation hath He, in boundless mercy, vouchsafed to us in the East, and we have been commanded to bear witness unto it among the nations of the earth.

Thus said the Lord,—"Sectarianism is an abomination unto Me and unbrotherliness I will not tolerate.

"I desire love and unity, and My children shall be of one heart even as I am One.

"At sundry times have I spoken through My prophets, and through many and various My Dispensations, there is unity in them.

"But the followers of these My prophets have quarrelled and fought, and they hate and exclude each other.

"The unity of Heaven's messages have they denied, and the science that binds and harmonizes them, their eyes see not and their hearts ignore.

"Hear ye men, there is one music but many instruments, one body but many limbs, one spirit but diverse gifts, one blood yet many nations, one Church yet many churches.

"Blessed are the peace-makers, who reconcile differences and establish peace, good-will and brotherhood in the name of the Father."

These words hath the Lord our God spoken unto us, and His new gospel He hath revealed unto us, a gospel of exceeding joy.

The Church Universal hath He already planted in

this land, and therein are all prophets and all scriptures harmonized in beautiful synthesis.

And these blessed tidings, the Loving Father hath charged me and my brother-apostles to declare unto all the nations of the world, that being of one blood they may also be of one faith and rejoice in one Lord.

Thus shall all discord be over, saith the Lord, and peace shall reign on earth.

Humbly therefore I exhort you, brethren, to accept this new message of universal love.

Hate not, but love ye one another, and be ye one in spirit and in truth even as the Father is One.

All errors and impurities ye shall eschew in whatever church or nation they may be found, but ye shall hate no scripture, no prophet, no church.

Renounce all manner of superstition and error, infidelity and scepticism, vice and sensuality, and be ye pure and perfect.

Every saint, every prophet and every martyr, ye shall honor and love as a man of God.

Gather ye the wisdom of the East and the West, and accept and assimilate the examples of the saints of all ages.

So that the most fervent devotion, the deepest communion, the most self-denying asceticism, the warmest philanthropy, the strictest justice and veracity and the highest purity of the best men in the world may be yours.

Above all, love one another and merge all differences in universal brotherhood.

Beloved brethren, accept our love and give us yours, and let the East and the West with one heart celebrate the jubilee of the New Dispensation.

Let Asia, Europe, Africa and America with diverse

instruments praise the New Dispensation, and sing the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

The Ideal Man of the New Dispensation

I love and honour woman as the daughter of God, and cherish no unchaste thought or inclination.

I love and forgive my enemies, and provocation never makes me angry.

I rejoice in the prosperity of others and am not jealous or envious.

I am humble and lowly, and there is no pride or vanity in my heart, neither pride of rank, nor pride of wealth, nor pride of learning, nor pride of power, nor pride of piety.

I am an ascetic ; I take no thought for the morrow ; I seek not, I touch not the earth's treasures, only that which comes from Providence I receive.

I serve those entrusted to my guardianship to the best of my ability, and always strive to train my wife and children to righteousness and devotion.

I am just and give every man his due. I pay bills and wages in due time.

I speak truth and nothing but the truth, and hate all manner of lying.

I am kind to the poor and anxious to relieve sufferings. I contribute regularly to charities according to my resources.

I love others and labour always to promote the welfare of mankind. I am not selfish.

My heart is set on God and on things above. I am not worldly-minded.

I believe in One God and wholly discountenance idol-worship.

I believe in universal brotherhood and do not recognise caste.

I value and accept truth in all sects and in all scriptures, and am above the sin of sectarianism. I believe that truth and holiness are confined to no Church.

I believe in all the dispensations of God and in all the Prophets and Saints through whom He has spoken at sundry times.

I believe in science as God's revelation and hate everything that is unscientific.

I always cultivate the eclectic religion of the New Dispensation in its many-sided aspects—love, communion, asceticism, wisdom, work—and never seek any one of these to the exclusion of the rest.

To Christ and other masters I am intensely loyal. To faith I add personal attachment and reverence.

I am always trying to establish in myself and in the world the harmony of all creeds, the science of religion.

I have seen my God and heard Him and am exceedingly *happy* in Him.

I am all things to all men. To me says—

A Christian : Verily thou art a Christian, and not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

A Hindu : Thou art a genuine Hindu and the *Rishis* dwell in thee.

A Buddhist : I look upon thee as one of us, and already *Nirvana* smiles on thy face.

A Jew : Thou art a pure Theist and a strict Jew, and *Jehovah* is thy God.

A Mohammedan : We hail thee as a believer in *Islam* and a follower of our Prophet.

A Yogi: Thou art like a venerable *yogi* absorbed in tranquil communion.

A Bhakta: In rapturous love thou art verily a *Vaishnav* for thou art intoxicated with devotion to *Hari*.

A Jnani: Thy wisdom is deep and among philosophers I would give thee an exalted place.

A Karmi: Surely thou belongest to the body of *Karmis* or workers, for thou art unwearied in philanthropy and thou always goest about doing good.

A Vairagi: To me thou art none other than a self-denying ascetic, and thy life proclaims thee a *faquir*.

Thus they all claim me, they all honour me. Blessed be the New Dispensation!

Creed of the New Dispensation

One God, One Scripture, One Church
Eternal progress of the Soul
Communion of Prophets and Saints
Fatherhood and Motherhood of God
Brotherhood of man and Sisterhood of woman
Harmony of knowledge and Holiness
Love and Work, Yoga and Asceticism in their highest development
Loyalty to Sovereign.

From the Chapter "Diksha" or Initiation, New Sanhita

Unto both boys and girls suitable education shall be given embracing all branches of general knowledge.

And when they are fit special instruction shall be given in *the essential and elementary principles* of the

New Dispensation by the family priest or some other competent teacher nominated by him.

When the boy has attained the age of sixteen or about that time, previous to marriage, he shall be formally admitted into the Church of the New Dispensation, on being declared qualified.

The rite of initiation shall take place in the local tabernacle on the usual day appointed for service or on special days, or in the family sanctuary, or at some other place suited to the occasion.

On the day appointed the candidate shall solemnly enter the bath-room, and there wash and cleanse himself by holy ablution.

After he has been anointed, water shall be poured over his head and body, and he shall say in his mind, Glory to *Sachchidananda*.

Then out of a new and bright metallic vessel, bearing the inscription of the flag of the New Dispensation, water shall be poured over his head by the officiating priest, and the candidate shall say within himself, As the Lord of water purifies the body, so may He purify my heart and make it clean ; and as this *santijal* (water of peace) comforteth my body, so may the water of grace bring peace to my soul!

At the conclusion of the ceremony of waterbaptism the candidate, the priest and all around shall say unitedly, Peace, Peace, Peace.

Dressed in a new suit of pure white linen with a yellow *gairic* cloth hanging over the neck, the candidate shall be conducted into the tabernacle in due time, and he shall occupy the seat in front of the *vedi* reserved for candidates for initiation.

After the introductory service the minister shall say: Let the *dikshartht*, or candidate, who desireth admission into the holy Church of God, be brought before me.

The spiritual instructor or the father or an intimate friend of the candidate shall stand forward with him before the *vedi* as his sponsor, and say, Revered minister, unto thee I commend this candidate named *Sri*...... for admission into the Church of the New Dispensation, and I declare him qualified to the best of my knowledge.

On the presentation of the candidate the minister shall thus interrogate him: Hast thou, O *dikshartht*, made up thy mind to join the holy Church of the New Dispensation?

The candidate shall say, Yes.

Minister: Dost thou know and believe in the *essential principles* of the New Dispensation?

Candidate: Yes.

Minister: Art thou called by the Lord to join His Church?

Candidate: Yes.

Minister: Art thou resolved to submit to the discipline of the Church and to bear witness unto the truth in thy daily life?

Candidate: Yes; so help me God.

Minister: Dost thou believe that God is one, that He is infinite and perfect, almighty, all-wise, all-merciful, all-holy, all-blissful, eternal and omniscient, our Creator, Father, Mother, Friend, Guide, Judge and Saviour?

Candidate: Yes.

Minister: Dost thou believe that the soul is immortal and eternally progressive?

Candidate : Yes.

Minister : Dost thou believe in God's moral law as revealed through the commandments of conscience, enjoining perfect righteousness in all things? Dost thou believe that thou art accountable to God for the faithful discharge of thy manifold duties, and that thou shalt be judged and rewarded and punished for thy virtues and vices here and hereafter?

Candidate : Yes.

Minister : Dost thou believe in the Church Universal, which is the depository of all ancient wisdom and the receptacle of all modern science, which recognises in all prophets and saints a harmony, in all scriptures a unity and through all dispensations a continuity, which *abjures all that separates and divides* and always magnifies unity and peace, which harmonizes reason and faith, *yoga* and *bhakti*, asceticism and social duty in their highest forms, and which shall make of all nations and sects one kingdom and one family in the fulness of time?

Candidate : Yes.

Minister : Dost thou believe in natural inspiration, general and special? Dost thou believe in providence, general and special?

Candidate : Yes.

Minister : Dost thou accept and revere the scriptures?

Candidate : Yes, *so far as* they are records of the wisdom and devotion and piety of inspired geniuses and of the dealings of God's special providence in the salvation of nations, of which records only the spirit is God's but the letter man's.

Minister : Dost thou accept and revere the world's prophets and saints?

Candidate : Yes, *so far as* they embody and reflect the different elements of Divine character, and set forth the higher ideals of life for the instruction and sanctification of the world. I ought to revere and love and follow all that is divine in them, and try to assimilate it to my soul, making what is theirs and God's mine.

Minister : What is thy creed?

Candidate : The science of God, which enlighteneth all.

Minister : What is thy gospel?

Candidate : The love of God, which saveth all.

Minister : What is thy heaven?

Candidate : Life in God, which is accessible to all.

Minister : What is thy Church?

Candidate : The invisible Kingdom of God in which is all truth, all love, all holiness.

Minister : Then avow thy faith in the presence of God Almighty.

Candidate : This day the of , I.........do in the presence of the Holy God solemnly avow my full faith in the essential principles of Pure Theism and enter the Church of the New Dispensation. So help me God.

Minister : In the name of God I charge thee to eschew all manner of ***untruth*** and ***sin*** and ***sectarianism,*** and lead a life of faith and purity, love and devotion, unto the glory of God and of His Holy Church.

Candidate : Most Merciful God, grant unto me Thy redeeming grace that I may magnify Thy truth and prove worthy of Thy Church.

Minister : May the Lord bless thee and be with thee for ever!

The minister shall then present unto the candidate the Flag of the New Dispensation, and two of the members of the congregation shall stand forward and present unto him on behalf of the Church, a copy of Scriptural Texts, a copy of the New Samhita and a carpet for daily devotion, and embrace him with brotherly love.

The candidate shall then bow reverently before the Lord, and the whole congregation shall say,

Peace, Peace, Peace.

TEXT

"Suvishalamidam Vishvam Pavitram Brahma Mandiram,
Chetah Sunirmalanteertham, Satyam Shastramanshvaram,
Vishvaso Dharmamulam hi, Pritih Paramasadhanam.
Svarthanashastu Vairagyam, Brahmairevam Prakirttyate."

"सुविशालमिदं विश्वं पवित्रं ब्रह्ममन्दिरम् ।
चेतः सुनिर्मलस्तीर्थं सत्यं शास्त्रमनश्वरम् ॥
विश्वासो धर्म्ममूलं हि प्रीतिः परमसाधनम् ।
स्वार्थनाशस्तु वैराग्यं ब्राह्मैरेवं प्रकीर्त्त्यते ॥"

Translated into English—

This vast Universe is the holy temple of God,
The soul without spots is the true sanctuary,
Truth is the scripture everlasting,
Faith is the root of all religion,
Love is the supreme spiritual Sadhan (Exercise),
Self-sacrifice is true Vairagya (Asceticism),
So declare the Brahmos.

Keshab and his party separated from the Adi Brahmo Samaj in 1866. A short time before that the book SHLOKSANGRAHA (texts from different scriptures) was being compiled. It was at that time that, inspired by Keshab, the text given above was composed by Upadhyay Gour Gobinda Roy. (Acharya Keshab Chandra, centenary Edition, Vol. I, p. 326) Thenceforward it adorned the first page of every issue of the DHARMATATTWA. It also forms the text on the title page of the SHLOKSANGRAHA. For full forty-four years it was not considered by our brethren of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj a text fit to be given in any of the publications. It was in 1922 (92 Brahmabda) that for the first time it got a place in the tenth edition of the Brahma Sangit of that Samaj.

Pandit Shivnath Shastri joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1869 and was initiated by Brahmananda Keshab Chandra in that very year along with twenty other youngmen (*vide* page 111 of 'Life of Shivnath Shastri' by Srimati Hemlata Devi, daughter of Pandit Shastri). Srimati Hemlata considers the date of her father's initiation (7th Bhadra 1791 Shak, 22nd August 1869) a memorable day. Every member of the Brahmo Samaj would think so. But Pandit Shastri did not consider it worth while to mention this most important item in his 'History of the Brahmo Samaj'. The text quoted was composed full three years before Pandit Shastri joined the Brahmo Samaj.

This text and the SHLOKSANGRAHA contain the initial idea of the Navavidhan, as the Universal Religion. In order to have a further idea of Navavidhan, Universal Religion, Yugadharma, as well as Motherhood of God we would recommend a careful study of the

Navavidhan literature commencing from the year 1860, *i.e.*, lectures, sermons, speeches, essays, tracts of Keshab Chandra, as well as the works of Rev. P. C. Mazumdar, Rev. Gour Gobinda Roy, Rev. Trailokyanath Sanyal, Rev. Girish Chandra Sen and others named in the Bibliography given at the end of the book.

We shall here pause a little to examine the alleged *Sarba Dharma Samanvya* and *Yugadharma* of Paramhansa Ramkrishna which, it is said by the followers of Ramkrishna, the poor brains of Keshab Chandra and his followers had not the capacity to understand fully. It is further stated that the fractional part of it only which Keshab could understand, was subsequently proclaimed as the Navavidhan (*vide* pp. 17 and 18 of Mr. Saradananda's 'Sri Sri Ramkrishna Lila Prasanga, Thakurer Dibyabhab and Narendranath'; also Mr. S. Mazumdar's 'Life of Vivekananda' in Bengali and other publications of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement).

We would simply ask the thoughtful readers to read carefully and with unbiased mind the Navavidhan literature side by side with the publications of the Ramkrishna Mission and of the allied parties and to form their own judgment. On examining the Ramkrishna literature, *viz.*, "M's" 'Ramkrishna Kathamrita,' 'Life of Ramkrishna' by Mr. Saradananda Swami, the works of Mr. S. Mazumdar, Swami Brahmananda's compilation 'Sri Sri Ramkrishna-upadesh' 7th Edition (1322 B. S., 1915 A. D.), we find *inter alia* the following items. At page 2 of Swami Saradananda's "Sri Sri Ramkrishna Lila Prasanga", 3rd Edition, 1334 B. S. (1927 A. D):

"The newly discovered truth by the Paramhansa,

viz., 'as many tenets so many ways' (*jata mat tato path*) was partially understood by Keshab and he built up *Navavidhan*." *

We must remind the readers that this is not a newly discovered thing at all. The Hindus all along for several centuries were not strangers to such ideas.

In Swami Brahmananda's book we find this much (pp. 132—137), under the heading "Sarbadharma Samanvya":

> "Come from the same God."
>
> "As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder, or a bamboo, or a staircase, or a rope, so diverse are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world is one of those ways."
>
> "God is one, His name is innumerable and His purposes are innumerable. One who chooses to call Him by a particular name will get response."
>
> "As many tenets so many ways, one can reach his house by different paths and conveyances or by walking."
>
> "Mother has equal love for all her children but she gives *luchi* to some, *batasa* to others to eat, according to need. God makes arrangements for *sadhaks* according to the capacity of each."
>
> "Being questioned by Keshab Chandra Sen as to

* The slogan *Jata mat tato path* connotes the traditional Hindu religious individualism. But the ideal of Navavidhan is a gospel of collectivism and emphasises the truth that *nana mat kintu ek path*.

why men of different religions quarrel, Ramkrishna said, 'In this world one claims land and house as his own and encloses it by boundaries, but none can enclose the firmament above. Through ignorance only, men say that the religion he follows is the best. But when they acquire knowledge then the quarrel amongst followers of different faiths come to an end'."

"Those who are narrow say ill of others' religions and that their own religion is superior to other religions and they build up a sect. Those who are devoted to God, they spend their time in *Sadhan* and *Bhajan* only and amongst them no party spirit exists."

"God is One, worshippers according to their individual leanings and dispositions worship Him in their own ways."

"Water is the same substance whether you call it water, *pani*, or *jal*; when one does not know another's language he cannot understand the other but when he learns it the difficulty disappears."

"So in whatever form you take the name of God or meditate it would benefit you."

At page 138 under the heading "Yugadharma" we find this:—

"While clapping hands take the name of God morning and evening then the sin and distress will disappear."

"Formerly there was simple fever, and only simple *Panchan* (country medicine) would

have removed it, now we have got malarial fever, so D. Gupta's medicine is required. Formerly people used to perform *Yajna* and *Tapasya*. In the *Kali Yuga* man depends on food for nourishment and his mind is weak so only taking the name of Hari (God) * sincerely would save him from worldly afflictions."

"The result will be the same if you consciously or unconsciously take His name. Some bathe anointing his body with oil; if one is thrown into water by another he will have an equal bath; similarly if one is on his bed and another pours water over him he also will have an equal bath."

"If one anyhow falls into an *Amritakunda* (spring of eternal life) he becomes immortal. If one is thrown into that *Amritakunda* he also becomes immortal. Similarly if one consciouly or unconsciously or by mistake takes God's name will succeed."

"In this *Kali Yuga* the *Naradia Bhakti* system is the right system."

"In other Yugas there were many austere *sadhans*. Those *sadhans* are not of avail in the present Yuga. On the one hand men are short-lived and they are oppressed by malaria, so how could they have rigid *sadhans*?"

These, so far we understand, are all the materials

* Keshab preached *namasadhan* even in 1873. (A. U., V., p. 79 also at page 161.)

out of which taking a portion only, we are told, Keshab built his Navavidhan. It will, however, be seen that Navavidhan is a huge edifice. It is not possible to reproduce here all the utterances and writings of Keshab and others from 1860 to 1883. The readers on careful persual of them will be able to see that *Yata mat tata path* (As many tenets so many paths) is not and was never the *Navavidhan* of Keshab Chandra Sen. Navavidhan is rather *Nana mat kintoo ek path*. Many tenets but *only one* path. How ridiculous therefore is the claim that Keshab learnt his Navavidhan from Ramkrishna or from any one else.

We shall now mention here some of the points on which the religion of Keshab materially differs from that of Paramhansa Ramkrishna. Some will be found in the evidence of the witnesses who had personal knowledge in the matter. That forms a separate chapter. These witnesses were in constant touch with both Keshab and the Paramhansa during the period when no disciples of the latter had gathered round him.

(1) The creed of the Hindu ascetic Ramkrishna, who forsook his wife and other relations of the world for spiritual culture and whose faith that merely coming in contact with woman and wealth hinders spiritual development, was diametrically opposed to the creed of Keshab and of the New Dispensation, *viz.*, the formation of heavenly families.

(2) Ramkrishna used to practise Yoga and unconscious *Samadhis* by controlling and regulating breath. (Vivekananda gave this information to Prof. Max Muller.)

Keshab far from approving of this sort of *Samadhis* or fits of unconsciousness considered these to be most

unnatural in the life of a true Yogi or Bhakta. In his small tract on *Yogi*, Keshab said "In breath-trance, hallucinations, hypernations, I have no faith. To endeavour to find God by regulating breath etc., is as futile and absurd as to go long distances and undertake tedious journeys with a view to see the light of the sun while our eyes we deliberately keep closed."

In his book the *Brahma-Gitopanishat* Keshab tells his *Bhakta* disciple "CHAITANYA (consciousness) is the name of the Bhakta. *Bhakti* is possible only in him who has consciousness and unconscious Bhakta is as much possible as a 'golden stone cup' is possible. One who will rejoice in God must have consciousness."

The highest state of Yoga as taught by Keshab to his disciples, is not like the so-called trances or *Samadhis* of Ramkrishna but to realise "an inseparable spirit union with the Supreme" amid the multifarious engagements of life in the midst of society and home.

In his book *"Yoga Objective and Subjective"* Keshab says, "When there is no actual contemplation, even when life is flung in the most stirring activity or the sorest trial his *yoga* knows no bi-*yoga*. His union knows no disunion.......He abides ever in mind and heart, in soul and body, and in details of daily life as a besetting and a fragrant reality......his thoughts and words and deeds are redolent of Divine sweetness.... This abiding union is life eternal, this is the highest heaven the true devotee pants for."

To his Yogi disciple Keshab says, "In the highest stage of Yoga there is no distinction of *within* and *without;* when Yoga is matured the *within* and *without* become alike. The Yogi sees God everywhere, in everything;

he lives constantly in God. That is the state of the Yogi that can be said to be *Yoga-siddha*, and in that state there is no fear for the Yogi to look after his own house and children. What you say or do now is your own saying and doing; but when you attain that state anything that you will say or do will be said and done by Him."

Ramkrishna's Yoga to a great extent was unscientific while Keshab's was natural and pure. It was freed from errors and occultism and based on scientific method. Keshab's Yoga reformed and perfected into a pure theistic and universal principle is applicable to whole humanity. It is not like the Yoga to be realised by adopting any kind of physical or physiological process. It was not the so-called and unnatural physical fits and unconscious *samadhis* which passes for Yoga popularly but which is not strictly speaking Yoga, which means, and at the time of the Rishis meant, union with God.

To his Yogi disciple in the *Brahmagitopanishat* Keshab says: "A real Yogi lives constantly in God, and the God lives in the Yogi likewise but he that has gone half the way cannot be a true Yogi." In his book 'Yoga Objective and Subjective' Keshab says: "The created soul, in its worldly and sinful condition, lives separate and estranged from the Supreme Soul. A reconciliation is needed; nay, more than mere reconciliation. A harmonious union is sought and realized. This union with Deity is the real secret of Hindu Yoga. It is spiritual unification, it is a consciousness of two in one: duality in unity. To the philosophical and thoughtful Hindu, this is the highest heaven. He panteth for no

other salvation, he seeks no other *mukti* or deliverance. Separation, disunion, estrangement, a sense of distinction, duality, the pride of ego, this is to him the root of all sin and suffering ; and the only heaven he aspires to, is conscious union and oneness with Deity. He is ever struggling and striving to attain to this blessed condition of divine humanity. Once in possession of it, he is above all sorrow and distraction, sin and impurity, and he feels all is serene and tranquil within."

It may be mentioned that we do not find any such sublime and high thoughts anywhere in the whole of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda literature.

The *yoga* which Keshab realised was natural. He never had recourse to any process that was against nature. In his *Jeevan Veda* he says: "I never repaired to the mountains in quest of a *Guru*, nor did I study books for yoga, nor suspended my breath." "Had I been guided by the advice of others they would perhaps have told me to suspend my breath and I should have adopted unnatural means of cultivating yoga. But it being Thy intention Mother, to make me happy, Thou didst save me from error. I was safe, I followed the path of yoga in a natural way."

Keshab's yoga of natural consciousness is realisable under similar conditions of thought as attested by the universal experience of the spiritual-minded. "Humble is my yoga," says Keshab in his small tract *Yogi*, "I just sit and commence, if I cannot, I at once conclude, I am out of element, and must therefore seek my God some other day when I may be in a natural and normal condition and feel quite at home. In breath-trance I have no faith, Mysticism and Occult science I practise not".

Keshab had never any faith in the doctrines of those who say, that by *yoga* man can attain to a stage so as to become God himself. Keshab believed in the ever-lasting distinction between the human soul and the Supreme Soul. He had never any faith in the Yoga of Buddhistic practice where the Yogi tries to lose his whole consciousness, nor did he believe that the finite soul could be transformed into the Infinite as ordinarily taught in the doctrine of *Aham Brahma* (I am God) of the *Advaitabadies*.

Keshab believed in the eternal progress of the soul. In the *Brahmagitopanishat* Keshab says to his disciple: "The Yogi progresses eternally in the line of *yoga*."

Keshab's *yoga* would not renounce all connections of the world and retire to forests and mountains for its cultivation.

In these and other matters the ideals of Keshab and Ramkrishna were poles asunder. Keshab was a worshipper of the Formless God. Ramkrishna was an idolator; he used to worship Hindu gods and goddesses. Ramkrishna was not a theologian at all, he never knew English or Sanskrit, his knowledge of Bengali was scanty; he never read the Bible or the life of Christ. The only thing he possessed that should always be remembered and admired was his intense love and hankering for the Great Mother. After he came in contact with Keshab he learned to worship *Nirakar* Supreme *Brahma* and gave up idol worship.

It will be interesting to know what Ramkrishna told Keshab's mother and Mr. Trailokyanath Deb, a veteran member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

English translations of the same are given below:

Extract from BRAHMANANDA KESHAB CHANDRA SEN'S MOTHER'S LIFE—(J. L. Khastagir)

Keshab's mother narrated thus:

Once Paramhansa Ramkrishna had gone to the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Three men were holding divine service there. After the service Ramkrishna said about one of them: "This one (Keshab) has been successful" (in having communion with God). Subsequently he made acquaintance with Keshab. Thereafter Ramkrishna used to come to our house. I had first seen him in that room in the second floor. He used to come to Keshab and sing and dance holding the hands of Keshab. On another occasion when he came to the Lily Cottage during the Maghotsav on the day of the *Varan* (Welcome) I asked him, after the Sankirtan, to take some food. He reflected for some time and then said, "Yes, Mother (Goddess Kali) directed me to take a *jilabi* (a sort of sweetmeat) at Keshab's house". I gave him a *jilabi* which he took bending his hand (he could not make it straight). When he was going away he said to Keshab, "Look here, Keshab, Mother (Kali) had said to me when I was coming, 'You are going to Keshab's place, just take a Kulpi-ice (ice-cream) there'." There was no vendor of Kulpi-ice there at the time, and Keshab became anxious from where he could procure it; just then a vendor came up and Keshab took a Kulpi and offered it to Ramkrishna who took it with great joy. On that *Varan* day while Sankirtan was going on, Keshab and Ramkrishna danced for a long time holding each other's hands. After the conclusion of the Sankirtan, Ramkrishna observed to

me: "Look here, mother, later on, the whole world will dance with even your entrails, for it is your womb that held this son." On another occasion Keshab and myself went to Dakshineswar Garden. After a prolonged talk with us the Paramhansa said, "Look, mother, I have caught hold of the Mother (Kali) after lots of trouble. Coming in contact with Keshab, it seems to me that *I shall have to be a convert to Nirakar (Formless God).*"

Many things were told by Ramkrishna on different occasions in appreciation of Keshab. None at that time thought it worth while to keep a note of all these. It was not then dreamt even that Ramkrishna's followers would manufacture stories for their propaganda in future and that those genuine utterances of Ramkrishna would be required to meet them.

Devi Sarada Sundari had similarly also heard many things from Ramkrishna but she could not retain all those in her mind. What little was left she was very reluctant to give out that much even for publication. With great difficulty she was induced to narrate something which she could remember at such a distance of time, on the understanding that those would not be published during her lifetime. The publisher, however, was induced to take the liberty to publish them earlier.

TRAILOKYA NATH DEB, AN OLD MEMBER OF THE SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ, ON KESHAB AND PARAMHANSA.

Translated from Dharmatattva, 16th Pous 1325. (December 1918)

I used to go over to the Paramhansa on the night of every full moon. We used to have prolonged conversation. But on *every* occasion he used to observe that Keshab was a Man amongst us all. At first I could not make out what he meant by this. Once when I had been to him I said, "I have so often come to you but you have not taken me to the Kali (the Goddess); let us both go and see the Kali tonight." In reply he said, "Why not go yourself and see? I would no more go to that *Shali* (a contemptuous term meaning wife's sister). If you like you may go and see." I stated that I was a Brahmo and they would not allow me entrance into the temple. I, therefore, asked him to accompany me. He said, "I would not go to that *Shali*; that *Shali* so long was making me ramble about and did not lead me to the right path. I would not go near her. You may go and none would object; only take off your shoes and enter the temple, for that is the rule." On another occasion when I went to see him, he repeated, "Look here, amongst you, Keshab is a man." The next morning as he was going with a *garoo* (a vessel) for his ablutions, he called me and wished me to accompany him. I said, "You are now going to the latrine, so please let me know when I should come." He said "Just come along, let us have some talk." After proceeding some distance he

went on to say: "Your Keshab is really a man. He has shown me God. That *Shali* (meaning the goddess Kali) was so long taking me through a tortuous way, and did not help me to find out the right path. One evening as I was going to take my seat at the usual place for meditation, I heard someone coming and tell me, 'Come, do come with me.' I followed him. He took me to the Ganges and asked me to take my seat on one of the lower steps of the *ghat*. As soon as I sat there for communion with God, I was obsessed with a bright luminary figure. *This vision of the Divinity was solely the fruit of my association with Keshab and nothing else*. It is thus I say that amongst you Keshab is a personage". (Mr. Deb continues) "I had read the life 'Kathamrita' and other biographies of Ramkrishna written by his disciples but did not find this anecdote in any of them. Presumably they suppressed it for this would be a home-thrust to those disciples."

From his boyhood till his death Keshab all along denounced idolatry and on innumerable occasions expressed his hatred for it. He never, in his life, entered a Hindu Temple, though he had the highest respect for the devotedness and firmness in piety of the Hindus. He took up the Hindu gods and goddesses by name, and explained the ideas that underlay each, but he never anywhere advocated idolatry, nor encouraged it ;—on the other hand he fought against it with Muslim zeal.

Swami Saradananda tells us that Ramkrishna was elated with joy when he could induce Brahmo Narendra Dutt (Vivekananda) to bow down before the image of Kali in the Dakshineswar Temple. Ramkrishna was a

Bhakta and Keshab too was a *Bhakta* and there was therefore agreement between them so far, but their creeds differed considerably as already stated. Ramkrishna was against family life. Keshab's aim was to be an ideal householder which was in accordance with the wishes of the Providence. In his book the *Brahmagitopanishat* Keshab says to his Yogi disciple:

"A hundred times fie to the *yogi* if he is to forsake all for the sake of *yoga*; if there be family and children they should be looked after and should be made comfortable as much as possible. It is a sin to forsake those that God entrusted to thy care. Do thy duties in sixteen annas (to the fullest extent), and if there be a pie less than that there is hell for you. But remember that in all these circumstances the mind of the Yogi will remain always untouched and above worldly attractions. Whether the wife of the Yogi has got many ornaments or has none, whether his son be placed in a very high position or be very poor, whether you give thousand rupees to him, the mind of the Yogi will never be moved under any circumstances; the mind of the Yogi should be like that of one who is always standing in a *Shmashan* (cremation-ground) on a dark midnight and near him a funeral pyre is burning in which fire the last chapter of his life will be written......The wife of the Yogi will come near him and there shall be issues by procreation, but everything will be in the Yogi's way, that is, in a feeling that he has nothing in the world as his own."

As already stated Keshab was a great hater of *Guruism* and *Avatarbad*, from his boyhood up to his death. We have already given some idea of it from his

utterances quoted above. He would not make any man his *Guru*, nor would he himself be a *Guru* to any fellow-being of his.

When he had just joined the Brahmo Samaj the members of his family tried to get him initiated by the family Hindu *Guru* but Keshab did not submit to it. The stalwart guardians of orthodoxy of the Sen family were baffled. Thus the young Brahmo's victory of faith won the heartiest congratulations of Maharshi Devendra Nath, which were "the first instalment of the unexampled friendship which silently grew up between Keshab and Maharshi afterwards." Thus it was that Keshab scored his first triumph over idolatry and persecution. This was a memorable incident in the history of the Brahmo Somaj. Though many unimportant and incorrect stories and mis-statements have been given in Keshab's quondam disciple Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri's 'History of the Brahmo Samaj', this incident, one of the most important, has been omitted. For this omission Pandit Shastri was taken to task by his own disciple Chandi Charan Banerji (*vide* the Author's 'Keshab As Seen By His Opponents', AP). *

Ramkrishna, on the other hand, advocated *Gurubad* and he used to initiate disciples, we are told, as the ordinary Hindu *gurus* do, of course after Keshab's death. If we can take the ideas of Swami Saradananda as those of his Master Ramkrishna, then such superstitious practices, as Spiritualism, *Kartavajaism*, etc., would be

* For English translation of one of the letters of Chandi Charan's please refer to p. 174, of the author's compilations K. C. Sen Testimonies in Memoriam Vol. II.

indicative of the highest spiritual culture. We must confess we are unable to accept it.

Keshab's faith rests on abolition of idolatry, mediatorship and *Avatarbad* in every shape. It rests on direct vision of God, direct inspiration from Him. Pure theism, natural *yoga* and *bhakti*, direct union with God, harmony of all religions, prayer, true faith, communion and the reconciliation of the purest type are its expression.

Ramkrishna's eclecticism was of a different type, which, however, was absent in an ordinary Hindu. Ramkrishna though a Hindu of Hindus was not a Shivaite, nor a Shakta, nor a Vedantist ; yet he was the totality of all those. He was a believer in idolatry ; and yet a faithful and devoted meditator of the Great Formless God, AKHANDA SACHCHIDANANDA. * His idea of *Samanvaya* (harmony) was, however, not so consolidated, scientific and all-sided and comprehensive as Keshab's. Keshab's was as it were a chemical compound a vital assimilation ; that of Ramkrishna a mechanical mixture. However, the good things in Ramkrishna attracted Keshab's heart to him. By appreciating those good things, Keshab certainly did not become Ramkrishna's disciple.

From all these as well as by studying his Sermons, particularly the one entitled *'Navavidhaney paritran''* (Salvation in the New Dispensation) A. U. X. 326, etc.,

* A reputed follower of Sri Ramkrishna, the late Journalist Nagendranath Gupta claims that the great master preached the message of toleration in his oft quoted saying *Jata mat tata path* and not that of religious harmony. This now appears to be the correct estimate of the position of the Saint of Dakshineswar.

and the Ramkrishna Mission literature side by side and with a scrutinising mind, it will appear that the differences between the faith and creeds of them were wide enough.

Keshab never called a man God. He was deadly against *Avatarbad* and idolatry. Even of Christ whom he called the Prince of Prophets, he said that he was a man and not God. Unlike Vivekananda he never, after his contact with Ramkrishna, reverted to idolatry which he shunned for good when he was a mere boy of thirteen or fourteen.

At page 126 of Swami Saradananda's book mentioned above, we find that Ramkrishna said that Narendra (Vivekananda) was God Incarnate (*Sakshat Narayana*).

From what we know of Ramkrishna, we cannot believe that Ramkrishna ever said so. It was quite improbable, nay, absurd, for him to have said so. We know up to his last moment he used to resent when some of his disciples used to call *him* God, let alone any other men.

Narendra at first belonged to the Brahmo Samaj and as such he was against idolatry and he used to worship the formless God. At page 251 of Swami Saradananda's book we find that Narendra reverted to idolatry and Ramkrishna was elated with joy. On the contrary, from the evidence of eye-witnesses, we find that Ramkrishna himself gave up idolatry as the result of his contact with Keshab.

Keshab was, as already said, dead against *Guruism*. He himself would be *guru* of none, nor would he call any man his *guru*. God Himself was his and everybody's only *Guru*, and he was against the so-called spiritualism

also. He was a pronounced hater of idolatry up to the last moment of his life.

At page 257 of Swami Saradananda's book we find that Ramkrishna as *guru* used to administer mystical formulas to his disciples. For some he prescribed *Vishnu mantra*, for others *Shakti mantra*. He used to calculate horoscopes of his disciples. He was *Guru* of *gurus*. This sort of thing Keshab hated from the very core of his heart. Such a Ramkrishna could never be his associate, much less his *guru*. We have also grave doubts as to the authenticity of the story that Ramkrishna became a veritable *guru*. At any rate we know he was incapable of being one so long as Keshab was alive. That he changed his ways afterwards, we have great doubts.

There is nothing in the world more preposterously absurd than the story of Ramkrishna's followers that the original idea of the New Dispensation was borrowed by Keshab from Ramkrishna.

We shall now show that the idea originated in Keshab and sufficiently developed from long before the first meeting of Ramkrishna and Keshab (March 1875). We need only remind our readers that what Ramkrishna's disciples understand by 'Navavidhan' was not and never can be the Navavidhan of Keshab. *We commence from 1860*, when Keshab was a young man barely twenty-two.

Let us see what materials we get full fifteen years before the first meeting of Keshab and Ramkrishna, that went to the making of Navavidhan which was formally proclaimed in 1880.

"RELIGION OF LOVE" *was an essay penned by Keshab in August 1860 (vide page 21, K. C. Sen's Essays, Fifth Edition).*

Here we give a few extracts from the same.

(1) "Each church reckoning itself the only accredited dispenser of salvation summarily consigns the lot of every dissenter to perdition ;...... In vain I traversed the vast field of Theology to find an undisputed creed". To this query the answer was, "......In that *Heaven-born* religion (Brahmoism) you shall have peace, comfort and truth for your understanding and salvation for your soul......"

(At page 134 of Swami Saradananda's book we find that Keshab asking as if he wanted a solution of some such thing from Ramkrishna. The matter has been so put there that an ordinary man would think that the relation between Ramkrishna and Keshab was that of *Guru* and *Shishya* and Keshab was an ignoramus quite innocent of such important matters. Surely, all this was not new to Keshab. He dealt with this point so far back as 1860 in this essay and showed a thorough and rational solution of it. There was no necessity for seeking a solution from Ramkrishna. If Keshab had made any such enquiry it was evidently to ascertain the views of Ramkrishna and not to seek a solution as a *Shishya* from a *Guru*.)

(2) "Brahmoism is anti-sectarian ; catholicity is its distinguishing characteristic, love is its very life. It is not the religion of any particular community, epoch or country ; it is *Universal Religion*, it is 'Human Catholic Religion'. Brahmoism goes forth to bring all mankind to a state of *unity* and *harmony*."

"Sectarianism limits and distorts man's views and sentiments, Brahmoism expands his soul and enlarges his conceptions."

"Sectarianism is opposed to the very vital principle of religion, to wit, love."

"Certainly the object of religion is to unite and bring together—not to separate, to consolidate the whole mass of mankind—not to divide it into countless sections, to attract, not repel, to make a brother, not an enemy."

[At page 122 of Swami Saradananda's book we find that Ramkrishna used to hate sectarianism and forming of sects (*dal*). But at pages 133 and 253 we see that Ramkrishna attempted to make over the charge of his sect (*sangha*) to Narendra. Chapter IX deals with his *Bhakta Sangha*.]

(3) "Love, union and peace are the watch-words of the Brahmoism—that sweet religion of universal love..."

"The world is his (a Brahmo's) home, the human race his family—God his Father."

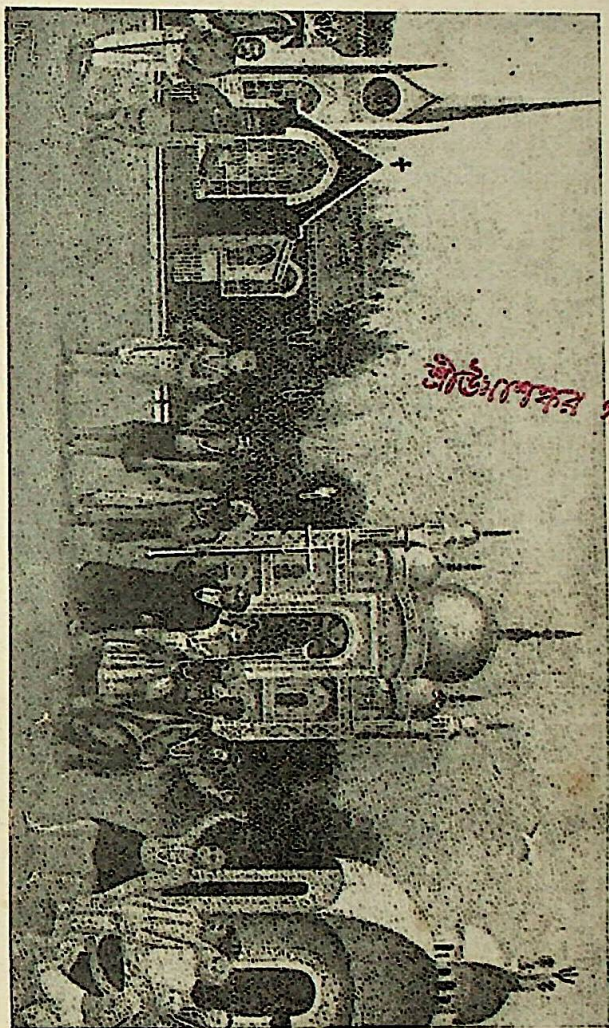
"Oh, when shall that day of universal peace and joy arrive, when every man shall exclaim from the depth of his heart—God is my Father, man is my brother? Say, is not a Christian, a Hindoo, a Mohammedan, your brother? Is not every man, whether an inhabitant of Africa or Asia, Europe or America, born of the same Father? Are not the white and black races, both works of His hand? Is He not the Father of the rich and the poor, the wise and the illiterate?...... If so, then perish sectarianism from the face of the earth......"

"Brahmoism! O thou sweet religion of heaven! Unfurl thy banners of love and peace, and bind all countries and nations by the sacred ties of brotherly affection. May thy kingdom day by day extend over the whole world, and may all nations unite in a holy chorus, and joyfully chant the sweet anthem—'The Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man'."

On the face of it we do not understand how Mr. J. N. Farquhar under the Plate X facing page 198 of his "Modern Religious Movements in India" gives this explanatory legend: "Ramkrishna Teaching Keshab the Harmony of all Religions."

This is a picture which shows that from the Hindu Mandir, the Muslim Mosque, the Christian Church and Jewish Synagogue troop out devotees of different faiths and sects singing the name of ONE GOD of the Universe, each carrying his banner and symbol; and at the head stands Keshab of Navavidhan holding aloft the Symbol of Harmony, while the Saint of Dakshineswar passes almost into a trance at the vision. "Keshab Chandra Sen is a much misunderstood religious teacher", says Dr. V. Rai. The same canker of misunderstanding has been at work here. Farquhar perhaps, had not the opportunity to go through Keshab's Essay of August 1860, wherein exists most clearly the very idea depicted in this picture. Commonsense suggests that when Keshab had this idea so far back as 1860 there was certainly no need of any instruction to him from Ramkrishna whom Keshab came to know in 1875 and the picture was evidently drawn subsequent to 1880, the date of the declaration of Navavidhan. Moreover, if anyone looks at the picture carefully he will certainly not be satisfied with Farquhar's interpretation. On the contrary the synthesis is shown to belong academically to Keshab, and Ramkrishna is drawing the attention of the world to it. Any artist or *Bhakta* would say so. The symbol of Navavidhan is in Keshab's hand. That is *very* significant.

Keshab's Essay "BASIS OF BRAHMOISM", *September 1860 (page 30, Fifth Edition of his Essays)*:

To Face page 58.

The idea was in Keshab's essay "Religion of Love" (1860)
and his lecture "Future Church" (1869)
(*Farquhar's caption is not correct*)

We find here these items:

"Brahmoism stands upon no book of Revelation, it is a religion with a fixed word of God to rest upon."

"Its basis is in the depths of human nature."

"It (Brahmoism) stands upon intuitions."

"Intuitive truths......are universal; they are in possession of the wise and the illiterate,—of the rich and the poor."

"Intuition is in harmony with true and universal philosophy."

"Brahmoism is universal and eternal."

"It is intuition which lies underneath those immutable and eternal truths which belong to all mankind, transcend the peculiarities of time and place, survive all vicissitudes and revolutions, buoy up above the fluctuations of sectarian opinions, and often shed their holy effulgence through the surrounding gloom of the grossest superstition and idolatry."

(Though Ramkrishna was an idolater Keshab discovered such effulgence in Ramkrishna and found in him an instance of an illiterate person being so perfect a *bhakta*. He found in him a living example of what he was preaching so long. He therefore became attached to Ramkrishna. He never could make Ramkrishna his *guru* for learning Navavidhan, the ideas of which were in Keshab even in 1860.)

"Brahmoism is a living religion. It reveals truth immediately and with all the vividness and force of direct perception. How animating, for example, is a Brahmo's knowledge of God! He does not seek God through abstractions and generalizations. He has not to carve out his God by the chisel of logic, he does

not worship an abstract metaphysical ideal of the DIVINITY, destitute of charms, and lifeless. Nor on the other hand is his God a historical personage, cognizable through the medium of representation and with the aid of proper evidences—and withal a God 'that *was* but not *is*'. His God is neither a logical nor historical divinity. His God is an everliving and ever-present *Reality*, that can be seen and felt. *No teacher*, no idea, no abstract proposition, no consecrated object acts as a *mediator* between him and God. He stands before his Father face to face. He beholds Him who is infinite in time and space, wisdom and power, love and holiness, and is at once enlivened and enraptured; then the clouds of doubts fly away, the soul is aroused with indomitable faith, all the spiritual energies are quickened, and love and joy sweeten the heart—then the soul falls at the feet of the ALL-HOLY, saying—Life of my life! how sweet is it to enjoy Thy presence and be encircled by Thy loving arms!"

(As has already been pointed out Ramkrishna attended once the Adi Brahmo Samaj some ten years before his first meeting with Keshab and had an opportunity of knowing the spiritual stuff Keshab was made of, and knew also that, years together. In spite of these facts our brethren of the Ramkrishna Mission had the temerity to say that he ran to Ramkrishna to gather every bit of spiritual experience.)

"The universe is the cathedral, Nature the high-priest, —every man, whether an illiterate rustic or a profound philosopher, a throned monarch or a ragged clown, a native of Europe or of India, a man of the first or the nineteenth century, has access to his Father, and

can worship and serve Him with faith and love. Do you suppose, my friend, that the God of love reveals Himself only to those who possess the means of a rich education and who have health and strength sufficient to take advantage of such means?"

[Here are the seed and root of the well-known text *Subisalam idam Vishwam* which was composed in 1866 full three years before Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri joined the Brahmo Samaj (1869). A learned missionary of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, a Reverend Doctor of Divinity * Mr. H. C. Sarkar tried quietly to pass it off as a composition of Pandit Shastri. Even when convinced of his mistake he has made no attempt to correct the false statement.]

In November 1860 in his Essay "SIGNS OF THE TIMES" *(p. 52 of the fifth edition of the Essays;* Keshab says:

"The independent spirit of the age will not brook the prostration of the soul beneath any other authority except that of God; nor will it, in its onward march, halt at the peremptory bidding of orthodoxy."

[Read along with this Keshab's Sermon of 1883 SWADHINATA (Independence) in his 'Jeevan Veda'. On the face of his uniform utterances advocating and practising independence, our brethren of the Protest-Church (S. B. Samaj) would say that Keshab was against 'Independence' and was a veritable Pope.]

"In view, the signs of the times display a manifest

* Rev. P. L. Sen of the Navavidhan Church refused to be decorated with this title when he, along with Mr. Sarkar, was offered it.

tendency to what is Progressive, Living, Spiritual and Catholic and fully sanction the hope that the 'Church of the Future' will be Theism—the Supreme Heaven-born Brahmoism."—*(New Dispensation)*.

Would our brethren of the Ramkrishna Mission say that all these ideas in 1860 were borrowed from Ramkrishna whom Keshab came to know only in 1875?

We thus see that Keshab Chandra, about fifteen years before his first meeting with Ramkrishna, began to preach the truths of his Universal Eclectic Church of the New Dispensation to the world.

In his lecture "Destiny of Human Life", 11th January 1862 (Lectures in India, Vol. II, p. 120), he gives a sketch of a new line for our life. Amongst many other things he says: "Where God says, 'Thou shalt do' let us be all submission."

"Brahmoism makes the Absolute the end and aim of human life ; and nothing short of continued progress in Godliness can satisfy its followers."

"The soul devoted to God displays a freedom from the bondage of sin and the world, a self-denial which has learnt to forego all the fascinations and prospects of this life at the call of duty, an aspiration heavenward, and a ceaseless progress unto truth......God alone it seeks, and God alone is its joy."

"So lies the regenerate soul, unmoved in the ups and downs of life ;......'life is in God'." "If the worship of aught other than the true God is idolatry, does not worldliness or mammon-worship fall within its range?"

"Brahmoism—pure Theism—is anti-idolatrous......" "Worship God and none but God......"

"Truth is Brahmo's watchword."

"Whether in prosperity or adversity, whether rich or poor, whether surrounded by family and friends, or bereft of all earthly companions and relations,—whatever your position and calling you must make God the sole object of your life."

"God is ever and anon preaching to all His children."

In the prayer portion Keshab says:

"Draw our hearts wholly unto Thy service, and enlist all our energies in the cause of truth, that we may do nothing in opposition to Thy will. Help us, O help us, Father of Mercies, for without Thy help all our attempts at progress will be vain. Be Thou our shield and buckler, our light and hope, in this world of trial. Unite us all in *one family* and establish *universal brotherhood* among mankind, that the lives of all may be consecrated to Thee and Thee alone."

On 23rd January 1862, Keshab in his sermon (Acharyer Upadesh, Part I, p. 1) said that this new religion will unite East and West, North and South, England and America, or in other words the whole world, and it will be the world-religion of the future. This is *not 'Yata mat tata path'* (as many tenets, so many paths) of Ramkrishna Creed.

It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of the prayer of the 11th January 1862. Certainly it was not a prayer of a *goonda* (ruffian). Keshab prior to 1875 was one of the *goondas* if we are to believe the absurd story given at page 24 of Swami Saradananda's book. It is impossible to believe that Rev. Mazumdar would tell the Swami (of all men) the ridiculous story that, before coming in contact with Ramkrishna all the Brahmos were engaged in *goondami* (ruffianism).

The story looks as if it had its origin in an opium-den.

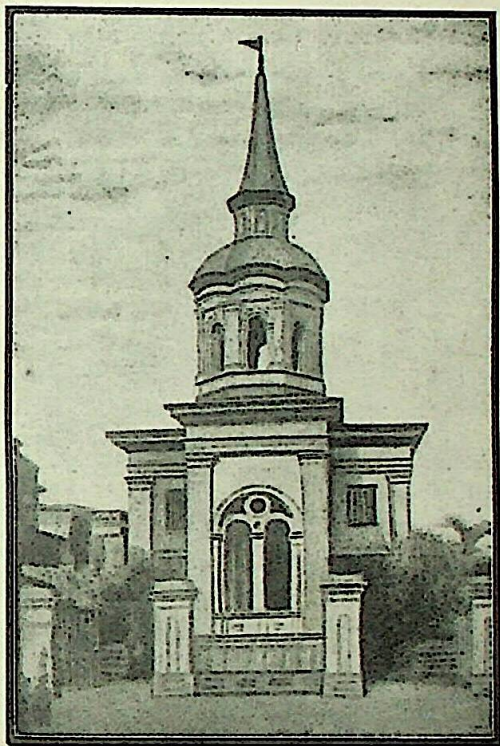
It will be quite relevant and interesting to note here that P. C. Mazumdar wrote in 1883 his "Faith and Progress of the Brahmo Samaj" in which he not only discussed the faith, but also the negative and positive (constructive) aspects of the activities of the Brahmo Samaj for fifty years. Many of the chapters in that book were reprints of articles written by him for the Brahmo journals before 1875.

Keshab's *Lecture*, "BRAHMO SAMAJ VINDICATED" *18th April 1863* (Lectures in India, Vol. II, p. 161):

"Thus the Vedas were deprived of their assured prerogative of infallibility, thus Vedantism fell to the ground, and the religion of the Brahmo Samaj became Natural Religion."

"Universal and natural truths common to all.—All truth is God's truth and therefore common to us all, as coming from our common Father it becomes our common property, and we are privileged by birthright to use it, wherever it may be found. Truth is no more European than Asiatic, no more Biblical than Vedic, no more Christian than Heathen. It is no more yours than mine."

Keshab and his party separated from the Adi (Calcutta) Brahmo Samaj in 1866, and in November that year the "Brahmo Samaj of India" was established. The construction of the present Prayer Hall (Mandir) in Machuabazar Street was then started. It was completed in 1869 and was formally opened on 22nd August, 1869. The pinnacle of the mandir was also at that time erected. It has not undergone any alterations. Only a metal flag

To Face page 64.

NAVAVIDHAN MANDIR
(*Varatvarsya Brahmo Mandir as cunstructed in 1869*)

was fixed on it after the proclamation of the Navavidhan in 1880. The pinnacle is a combination of vault and spire of a Hindu Mandir, a Christian Church and a Mohammedan Mosque, representing the harmony of religions, and is the most expressive symbol of the harmony in the creed of the *Navavidhan*.

In 1866 again the *Sloka-Sangraha* which was in course of preparation for a number of years was published. It contains the texts from the Hindu Shastras, Christian, Sikh, Mohammedan, Chinese and Zend-Avestan scriptures, evidencing the synthetic character of the Navavidhan. Again in that very year the text *Suvishalam* (the vast universe is the holy temple of God, etc.) was composed by Upadhyay Gour Gobinda Roy, inspired by Keshab.

In that very year (5th May 1866), Keshab in his lecture, "Jesus Christ: Europe and Asia" (Lectures in India, English Edition Vol. I. p. 47), said:

"Oh! for the day when race-antagonism shall perish, and strife, discord and all manner of unbrotherly feeling shall for ever pass away, and harmony shall prevail among us all! May England and India, Europe and Asia, be indissolubly united in charity and love, and self-denying devotion to truth."

Again in the same year (28th September 1866.) Keshab in his Lecture "Great Men" (Lectures in India, Vol, I, pp. 86—88), said:

"Each of the prophets came into the world as a messenger of God, bearing a distinct message of glad tidings which he contributed to the cause of religious enlightenment and progress. We must then freely honour all of them, and gratefully accept from each what he has to deliver, instead of binding ourselves

as slaves to any particular person as the only chosen prophet of God. For at 'sundry times and in diverse manners God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets'. And though Jesus Christ, the Prince of Prophets, effected greater wonders and did infinitely more good to the world than the others, and deserves therefore our profoundest reverence, we must not neglect that chain, or any single link in that chain, of prophets that preceded him, and prepared the world for him; nor must we refuse honour to those who, coming after him, have carried on the blessed work of human regeneration for which he lived and died. Let sectarianism perish, then. Let denominational and geographical boundaries be for ever forgotten, and let all nations unite in celebrating a universal festival in honour of all prophets, regarding them as the Elder Brothers of the human race. Hindu brethren, as ye honour your prophets, honour ye likewise the illustrious reformers and great men of Christendom. I know, my educated countrymen, you appreciate and honour England's immortal bard, Shakespeare, the greatest literary genius of the West; and you honour, too, the military, and political, and scientific great men whose brilliant lives shed lustre on the profane history of Christian nations. Why should you scruple then to pay the tribute of your esteem and gratitude to the religious geniuses, the inspired prophets of Christendom, who have nourished and enriched its soul, and, in fact, the soul of humanity at large? To you, my Christian brethren, also, I humbly say—As ye honour your prophets, honour ye likewise the prophets of the East. Thus hostile churches, and the dismembered races of mankind shall be knit together in one family, in the bonds of

universal faith, in the common Father, and universal gratitude and esteem towards their elder brothers, the prophets."

In this lecture Keshab speaks of Universal Inspiration, the most important item of the creed of Navavidhan:

"Divine life can only be secured by divine grace—it comes pouring into the soul from Him who is its source. This is inspiration, it is the direct action of the Holy Spirit. It is God's free gift, not man's acquisition. It comes not through our calculation or reasoning, not through our industry or struggle, but through prayerful reliance upon God's mercy. It cannot be purchased by our wisdom or our good works. The Merciful God vouchsafes inspiration into the heart which panteth after it."

In this lecture Keshab speaks of, God in Nature—God in History—God in the Soul.

In this lecture he also says how to honour prophets:

"To honour them (prophets) is no meanness, no sycophancy, no sordid 'Boswellism', no idolatrous 'Hero-worship', as some foolishly imagine. To honour them is to honour our benefactors, and to glorify the greatness of human nature......It is indeed painful to contemplate the two-fold evil of such sectarian bigotry. Man, mortal man, with all his frailties and shortcomings, is deified and worshipped; and to him is rendered that supreme adoration which belongs to God alone! This idolatrous bending of the knee before man, is an insult to Heaven and an audacious violation of that entire loyalty and allegiance to God which is demanded of every true believer."

And about this Keshab, Mr. "M" says that he accepted before Ramkrishna the idol Goddess Kali

as his object of worship and we are to believe him!*

Sermon of 23rd January 1865, delivered from the pulpit of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Here we have all the essentials of the New Dispensation.—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. I, p. 9)

In this sermon he also addresses God as Mother,

Keshab's *Lecture*—"REGENERATING FAITH"—24th January 1868 (Lectures in India, Vol. I. p, 95).

In this lecture he speaks about his ideal Faith thus:—

"Such faith, accompanied by repentance, resignation, and prayer, such *childlike* faith, the Merciful Father will abundantly bless. His holy spirit working through such faith will effect individual and national regeneration, and establish the kingdom of heaven in all hearts, in all families, and amongst all the nations of the earth."

Those who understand what is Navavidhan will find here all the essential ingredients of the same. Here long before meeting Ramkrishna he speaks of "childlike" faith. Rev. Girish Chandra's statement that in Keshab this idea was inspired to greater extent by his contact with Ramkrishna does not mean that Keshab learnt it then for the first time.

Now we come to his lecture "THE FUTURE CHURCH" delivered on 23rd January, 1869. (Lectures in India, Eng. Edition, Vol. I, p, 128.) We find therein the following:

* The words "misrepresentation, misleading, mischief, misstatement, misdirection, misunderstanding, mistake, misapplication, misinformation, misinterpreting" all begin with the letter "M"!

"It is of great importance to theology to harmonise, if possible, such conflicting opinions and hopes and determine honestly and dispassionately, *where all religious movements will most likely meet and unite in future;* so that the hearts and minds of contending sects may be brought together, and made to pursue *the common path* which leads to the future church."

"Idolatry in its ten thousand forms of natureworship, pantheism with its arrogant spirit of selfadoration, and the servile worship of man by man will be denounced and chased away, not only as errors but as high treason against the supremacy of the *Most High*......"

"Thus, instead of a hundred hostile churches, there shall be upreared, in the fulness of time, one vast cathedral, where all mankind shall worship with one heart the Supreme Creator."—This certainly never means Ramkrishna's—"as many tenets so many paths".

"If all mankind love their common Father, harmony and spiritual fellowship will for ever prevail among them, and there will be no discord under the cloak of religion. All the rancour, bitterness and hatred which have divided the religious world and made the various churches and sects violently antagonistic to each other, will be swept away."

(Here Keshab shows the panacea for Hindu-Muslim conflicts.)

"Such brotherhood among all mankind will be realised in the church of the future. Its cardinal doctrines will be *'the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man'*......Thus the wise and the illiterate, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, shall dwell together in the holy tabernacle of God........Thus shall love purify the

soul, and realise 'peace on earth and good-will among men'.......Surely the future church of this country (India) will be the result of the purer elements of the leading creeds of the day, harmonised, developed, and shaped under the influence of Christianity. But the future church af India must be thoroughly national; it must be an essentially Indian Church."

"The future religion of the world I have described will be the common religion of all nations, but in each nation it will have an indigenous growth, and assume a distinctive and peculiar character..........Thus India shall sing the glory of the Supreme Lord with Indian voice and with Indian accompaniments, and so shall England and America, and the various races and tribes and nations of the world, with their own peculiar voice and music sing His glory; but all their different voices and peculiar modes of chanting shall commingle in one sweet and swelling chorus—one universal anthem, proclaiming in solemn and stirring notes, in the world below and the heavens above, 'the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man'. May the Merciful Lord hasten the advent of the true church, and establish peace and harmony among His children! And as His name has been solemnly chanted to-night in this splendid hall by an immense conçourse of worshippers of various races and tribes, so may all His children assemble in His holy mansions, and blending their million voices in one grand chorus, glorify Him time without end."

We would again draw the attention of Mr. Farquhar to the passage just quoted and request him to ask himself whether he was justified in giving the explanatory note under plate X to face page 198 of his "Modern

Religious Movements in India''. We must remind him that this was Keshab's utterance over six years before the *first* meeting of Keshab and Ramkrishna. We would again ask him in all seriousness to say now, whose idea it was—whether Keshab's or Ramkrishna's, whom Keshab did not even see then. Truth and not untruth should be presented to the public. Whether in such circumstances in a subsequent time, we ask, Keshab would require the help of Ramkrishna to understand an idea which originated in Keshab himself long before and even as early as 1860? It is not safe to accept and pronounce a thing on the strength of misrepresentation of interested propagandists. That would not stand the test of scrutiny in the long run.

We would ask our brethren of the Ramkrishna Mission whether Keshab did not speak of the harmony of religions in the most explicit way, and not by riddles even in 1869? Is this not perfectly clear to the merest tyro in religious thought and spiritual culture? But, of course, no one is more blind than he who will *not* see?

In 1870 Keshab visited England; there from pulpits and platforms he preached his ideals of 'Navavidhan' which were then gradually developing. It was ten years before the Navavidhan was formally declared, eight years before the Cooch-Bihar marriage and the establishment of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and five years before Keshab and Ramkrishna met for the first time. It is not possible to give all his utterances here. We shall mention a few of them only, from the volume * ''K. C. Sen in England'':

* Subsequently reprinted in a single volume.

"If we wish to be true to the Spirit of Jesus, if we wish to be loyal to our Divine Father our interest and duty should always be to set our face against sectarianism. Let us bring together the *Vedas* and *Koran*, and all the Hindu and Mohammedan scriptures, and all the races and creeds and nationalities existing on the earth, bring them together, and let us put them all in proper shape and let us realise the unity of the true church of God."

"If we embrace all nations and races, if we can take in all religious scriptures and so-called sacred writings, if we are prepared to do honour to all prophets and the great men of all nations and races then certainly but not till then, can we do justice to universal and absolute religion as it exists in God."

"Whether, therefore, we come to England, America, Germany or France or any other country, where similar religious movements are going on, we ask them to co-operate with us. We ask the whole world to treat us as fellow-disciples, to give unto us all the good things they possess and enjoy for our benefit, that we may thus collect materials from all existing churches and religious denominations in order, in the fulness of time, to construct and uprear the Future Church of the world."

It was then that he further said:—

"I should be a traitor to the Universal Church of Theism, to which I belong, if my heart and soul were not capacious enough to take in the whole length and breadth of the Christian Church. Come unto me, brothers and sisters of England and France, Germany and Switzerland, and Italy and all Europe, come unto me, brothers and sisters of America, come, all nations

of the world, and let us all co-operate.........to hasten the day when the Kingdom of Heaven shall be established on earth."

"He revealed Himself in times gone by to prophets and saints and good men; even now, if we approach Him in a reverent and prayerful spirit. He will speak to *us* as the Father speaketh to His beloved children."

"As a member of the *Universal Church* of love and brotherhood, I cannot but declare my most vigorous and emphatic protest against war in all its forms, mild or deadly."

"The East and the West unite."

"Truth is not monopolised by any particular section of the Church."

"To acknowledge Christ as master is not to believe in all the dogmas taught by Christian sects, but to revere him as our teacher and our *elder brother*."

"He (Keshab) had learnt great lessons from the study of his own life."

"He (Keshab) felt that he had a Heavenly Friend always near to succour him. God himself told him this: no book, no teacher but God Himself, in the secret recess of his heart spoke to him in unmistakable language, and gave him the secret of spiritual life, and that was *prayer*, to which he owed his conversion."

"He (Keshab) believed his church belonged to God, and that he was under the guidance of God's spirit and should *never allow any man to guide him*—This way or that. He had no faith in human guidance."

Sermon of 22nd January, 1871—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, p. 32).

We find in this sermon, all the ideas of the New

Dispensation, Universal Religion, Harmony, acceptance of *truth* from wherever found, catholicity, honouring prophets and scriptures of all countries, and that Brahmoism is for the whole world and that there is the hand of God in the Brahmo religion and man had no hand in it.

Sermon of 23rd January, 1871—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, p. 38).

All the above ideas are also to be found here also. It further says that the religion of the Brahmo is a *Dispensation* sent by God for bringing peace to the world. It is for the whole world.—It will show *new* light—shall bring harmony, peace and union,—union between God and man—the men of all countries are our brothers—that peace could be had in God only—teach us to repent and pray—the whole world will form one family—quarrel and disunion shall disappear—there shall be no quarrel between different faiths—shall do away with castes, and the difference between the learned and the illiterate—we should see God in our heart—Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man—God is Father and Saviour—God directs us to shun sin, to serve humanity, to be truthful and to control passion—to look at men and women with pure heart......to do away with impure thoughts—God alone is our only Master, Teacher and *Guru*, etc.

These are only a few of the ideas of the New Dispensation. Do we find all these so elaborately and sublimely treated in any of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda literature?

9th April, 1871—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, p. 60).

In this sermon Keshab speaks of all the scriptures

of the world and of all the prophets and *bhaktas*—how to take benefit from them—how far and to what extent they are to be accepted—that that scripture is no scripture which does not disclose the face of God to our heart—A *bhakta* is all transparent, he does not claim to be a mediator, but he helps others to see God—Bring all the children of God within our hearts—must not allow any one to be a mediator, etc.

17th September, 1871—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, p. 225).

The heading of this sermon is "God above is our only *Guru* (Master)" and he deals with it elaborately.

(There is a vast difference between the creed of Keshab and that of Ramkrishna and his followers who understood Ramkrishna "fully" as appears from their literature and who may presume they are following his tenets to the letter; we, however, think they understood neither Ramkrishna nor his religion.)

24th September, 1871—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, p. 236.)

In this sermon he speaks of God in History.

22nd October, 1871—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, p. 267).

In this sermon he says:

"Do not aspire for fame or honour—do not appropriate the honour due to God alone."

(Vivekananda calls himself God—everyman is God—a man cannot commit sin—he was the principal disciple of Ramkrishna and he is supposed to have understood what they call Ramkrishna's creed most thoroughly which poor Keshab could not. Indeed Keshab should not have understood it, if such was Ramkrishna's creed. We,

however, are not prepared to think the saintly soul's creed was such as is assigned to him by Vivekananda and his other disciples. At least it was not so as long as Keshab was alive.)

22nd January, 1872—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 14).

Here Keshab says:

"The men and women of all the countries, the inhabitants of this world as well as of the next world, all the prophets and *sadhus*, have joined us. A Brahmo is one who can sit at the feet of the Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, men of this country as well as of other countries, and gather truths from them and bestow them love."

24th January, 1872—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 39).

Here he speaks of the Shastras (scriptures) of the Brahmos.

"To see God there is no necessity of a mediator—there is no necessity of an idol for His worship—the Brahmos learnt these long ago. But it was specially in the last year we heard that God speaks to his *sadhaks* and the latter distinctly hear His commands (*adeșh*)."

"God's word alone is our proof. When He commanded me to accept certain truth I accepted it as my own wherever I found it, either in a book or from a *sadhu* (saint). Then when He asked me to give up an error, I at once, in giving up that error, gave up father, mother, Guru, friends, Veda, Bible, Koran and all, dismissing my attachment thereto. Who has ever been charmed by the beauty of *truth* without hearing from the lips of God?"

31st March, 1872—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 101).

"There is nothing to intervene between God and man........."

"As long as some *guru* (human) or book intervenes so long one cannot understand what it is to see God. So take the immediate path—proceeding by which path one will see God as soon as the eyes (internal) are opened."

"God can be seen easily".

26th March, 1872—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. III, p. 158).

In this sermon Keshab shows that worshipping God and leading a family life side by side, is possible and that is what God desires. These are not antagonistic to each other as many think. (Here his creed materially differs from Ramkrishna's.)

29th September, 1872—(Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. IV, p. 17).

"Brahmoism is eternal and most catholic. It is not confined to any country, time or to any book or special man. There is no question of pride of any particular community such as Hindu, Christian, or Mohammedan. It will crush all the barriers of racial character and unite all the nations aud races of the world. There was enough of sectarianism—no more of that. It (Brahmoism) is the self-owned property of entire humanity. God Himself dwelling within us, is teaching us spiritual affairs. God is our Master (*Guru*), He is our leader, He is our scripture. We do not accept any other Master, leader or scripture."

"In the fulness of time the Lord has sent down the *Brahmo Dharma* to the world; this religion of God

has broken all the barriers between Hinduism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, and it accepts all to be its own. Surely, one day this religion will be the religion of the whole world."

Keshab in his Bengali Sermons of *13th April, 27th April* and *11th May, 1873*, gives the ideas of Navavidhan copiously. (*Acharyer Upadesh*, Vol. IV, pp. 155, 170, 184.)

1874—This is the year in which the unfolding of Navavidhan progressed to an explicit stage as would appear from the following—and in this year Ramkrishna was still unknown to Keshab:—

Daily Prayers, (Bharat Ashram), Pt. 1, p. 35, Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 119.

Prayer of 6th March, 1874.

"We shall be safe by calling you Mother."

"Oh Lord, do all to preserve your *Dispensation*...... Let us believe that this *Dispensation has come from Thee* and nothing wrong will come out of it."

Prayer, 24th February, 1874, Pt. II, p. 32,
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 101.

"Father I have understood that if we do not accept your Vidhan (Dispensation) we shall have to feel the pangs of hell, even if we be in heaven."

Prayer of 28th February, Pt. II, p. 40,
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 108.

"Still why do we not depending on Thee depend on men......"

"Hast Thou left us helpless and as if Fatherless?

Hast Thou in this *New Dispensation* retired, leaving the burden on human shoulders?"

(Here the specific words *Nutan Vidhan* have been used.)

Prayers of 4th and 9th March, 1874, Pt. II, pp. 45, 52,
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, pp. 114, 124.

Mention of *Vidhan* and *Vishes Vidhan* (Special Dispensation), *i.e.*, the New Dispensation is to be found in these prayers.

Prayer of 16th March, 1874, Pt. II, p. 68,
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 142.

"In this Vidhan surely everyone has to take a special vow."

Prayers of 24th February, 25th February, 20th March, 21st March, 24th March, 3rd April, and 26th December, 1874 (Pt. II, pp. 31, 34, 72, 74, 77, 83, 101, 127,—Centenary Edition, Pt. I, pp. 100, 102, 147, 149, 151, 158, 176, 223) also deal with Vidhan (Dispensation) and our duties in that connection.

Now we come to the "*Prayers* in the Bharatavarsiya Brahma Mandir".

Prayer of 15th March, 1874, p. 38,
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 138.

"Now we understand that we shall be able to love Thee most, to understand the sweet and loving relation of Thee with *all Dispensations*, otherwise why art Thou showing us the near advent of the *Dispensation*......We shall be happy by being loyal to your Dispensation."

Prayer of 19th March, 1874, p. 40,
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 145.

(Also speaks of the present Dispensation, meaning thereby the New Dispensation). "I am praying to

Thee that these sisters may by joining Thy present dispensation, and calling Thee 'Mother' dedicate their lives to Thee......"

Prayer of 6th September, 1874, p. 53.
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 211.

In this prayer even the specific term *Nutan Vidhan* (New Dispensation) has been used.

Prayer of 22nd March, 1874, p. 42.
Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 152.

In this the idea of New Dispensation has been very clearly given. English translation of the full text of it is given below.

GOD'S DESCENT ON THE EARTH WITH ALL DISPENSATIONS.

(Translated from Bengali Prayer of Sunday, 10th Chaitra, 1795 Shak, March 22, 1874, *vide* p. 42, Prayers in Bharatavarsiya Brahma Mandir—Centenary Edition, Pt. I, p. 152.)

Oh Lord, how wonderful is the scripture that has been opened unto us, but wretched as we are, we do not care to peruse it. We know not that our religion is the religion of the whole world. That is why we think our religion will die leaving no trace behind. Our hearts are buoyed up to think that Thou hast ever brought the Kingdom of Heaven on earth from the beginning of her history. Oh Fountain of Love, I perceive Thy Grace has solved the problems of religions, removed all discord and even unified all truths. May all the saints of the past be realised and cherished by us. Thou art ever kind, Thou hast initiated us into the Order of Love.

Oh God, we feel Thy unfailing love. Thou hast come with all Thy Dispensations. Thou art the Lord of Eternity. Not one but hundreds of scriptures lie at Thy feet. Thou hast come with all Thy righteous and saintly children. Thou hast done everything for us.

Oh Lord of Mercy, Thy kingdom extends over the whole world and yet Thy favours are bountiful. How can we forget Thy gift of love? Thou hast revealed so great a scripture to us. We shall worship Thee in unison with the spirits of the saints of all ages and all countries. Thou vouchsafest the descent of all great saints of this earth unto us. Thou dost ordain that they be on our side in the Dispensation of the time. *Amen.*

ACHARYER UPADESH, Vol. V, p. 204.

Sermon in Bengali—*Special Dispensation, 8th March, 1874.*

Here Keshab speaks of the Special Dispensation (*i.e.,* New Dispensation). Here he also says that no human being is our *Guru* (teacher). God alone is our *Guru.* He also says that this Special Dispensation was then coming.

ACHARYER UPADESH, Vol. V, p. 215.

Sermon—*"Faith in the Special Dispensation"*, 15th March, 1874.

Here Keshab *inter alia* says that the Brahmo Samaj is a Special Dispensation of Providence and that this Brahmo religion is the result of all the previous Dispensations that Providence sent for the salvation of the world.

Here also he said that the advent of Dispensation (*i.e.*, New Dispensation) was very near.

ACHARYER UPADESH, Vol. V, p. 230.

Sermon—"*Providence—Special Dispensation*", 29th March, 1874.

Here also he speaks about this Special Dispensation and uses the specific term *Nutan Vidhan* (New Dispensation).

ACHARYER UPADESH, Vol. VI, pp. 76, 103.

Sermon of *8th November* and Sermon of *25th December, 1874* (and many other sermons about that time).

In these he speaks of the essence of the New Dispensation.

Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar in his Sermon "The whole world is the house of this religion" of 13th December, 1874, also speaks of this Dispensation. In it Rev. Mazumdar says:—

"Oh Refuge of the poor, should we not see that you have given us a Dispensation much higher than all the previous Dispensations."

By this time a strong anti-party had already been formed within the Brahmo Samaj to thwart the development of these higher ideas. This rationalistic party began to gather more strength and was anxious either to depose Keshab or to separate from him. The Cooch-Bihar marriage gave an opportunity to do the latter. By this split, no doubt, Keshab's party became poorer numerically, but it profited immensely, as the obstacles and impediments in the way of progress and further

developments were thereby removed; and Keshab and his loyal associates got free scope. The result was the 'Navavidhan' which we have got. What a precious gift of Providence it is! It must have its full appreciations from the future generations. It may take even centuries to understand it properly. Navavidhan is not the work of any human agent, but it came direct from Heaven, as its Own Dispensation.

Cooch-Bihar marriage in a way proved a blessing, as it afforded necessary opportunities for the development of the *Navavidhan*, after the obstructionists separated from Keshab.

Pandit Sitanath Tattvabhushan of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj frankly admits in his article "My Debt to Keshab" that Navavidhan is "a developed form of Brahmoism". He further says: "Even when the New Dispensation (Navavidhan) was formally promulgated my views scarcely differed from Keshab's."

Even Pandit Shivanath Shastri was subsequently obliged to admit that Navavidhan was a great event in the history of the Brahmo Samaj, for its *Universality* and *Unifying character of all the conflicting creeds of the world*.

ACHARYER UPADESH, Vol. VI, p. 131.

Keshab's Sermon—"*To see the Mother of the World*", 25th January, 1875 (about two months before the first meeting of Keshab and Ramkrishna) and his Sermon—"*Ascetic Family*", 21st March, 1875, (p. 189) delivered probably only a week after the first meeting. In these also he deals with the ideals of the New Dispensation.

Rev. P. C. Mazumdar also in his sermon of 21st

March, 1875. *"God's Dispensation is Universal"*—deals with the Present Dispensation, the New Dispensation.

The memorable lecture of Keshab Chandra Sen "BEHOLD THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN IN INDIA", was delivered on 23rd January, 1875 (six weeks *before* the first meeting of Ramkrishna and Keshab), *vide* K. C. Sen's 'Lectures in India' Eng. Ed., Vol. I, p. 194.

We shall give here a few extracts from this lecture:

At page 194 we find:

"Behold that heavenly light in the midst of India! How bright! How beautiful! How it ascends, extends, and expands from day to day! Do you see it? It is the light of a New Dispensation vouchsafed by Providence for India's salvation. And do you hear that sound, like the rushing of many waters? It is the voice of the Lord. The Almighty speaks unto our country, now, to-day, as He did before other nations. It is His word, mighty as the raging whirlwind, yea mightier far than that, containing the message of life ever-lasting to the millions of this land. Let them that have eyes see; let them that have ears hear. Everything proves, all the events of the age strikingly testify that the morning of India's redemption hath drawn nigh."

Again, in page 196, and following pages we find:

"What is the meaning of this word, *Dispensation*, which seems to puzzle many a scientist and theologian of the present day?......The dispensations of Divine mercy are all-inclusive, not exclusive; they embrace all mankind and exclude none. The redeeming mercy of Heaven is universal and eternal......the Universal Father loves all children alike, but He does not deal with them alike. In various ways does He deal with different nations,

communities, and individuals, to bring about their salvation.......The special dispensations cannot clash......They are all the harmonious outcome of that universal economy of redemption which will one day establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.......What I accept as the New Dispensation in India neither shuts out God's light from the rest of the world; nor does it run counter to any of those marvellous dispensations of His mercy which were made in ancient times. It only shows a new adaptation of His eternal goodness, and Indian version and application of His universal love.......Surely India needs a special dispensation to save her."

"He (God) does not follow our dictates or suggestions ;......His ways are not as man's ways.......A *new dispensation*, therefore, has been sent unto us which presents to us, not indeed a new and singular creed, but a new development of by-gone dispensations."

"......In diverse languages and diverse ways will the Lord yet speak to the different nations of the world, through special messages, in the fulness of time."

"......That a *new dispensation* has come unto us, let us see what its leading ideas and principles are."

Then Keshab goes on to give some of the ideas:

"*When the worldly theologian undertakes to instruct mankind he manufactures theory after theory, dogma after dogma in endless succession, till he piles up an overwhelming mass of articles of belief for the salvation of the world.* Not so is the teaching of Providence, A word, a syllable, a simple sound from the lips of the Lord is enough to instruct and save man."—(page 201)

"When, however, the soul has heard from the very lips of the Lord Himself that He is, nothing on earth can

shake its conviction or weaken its faith......How do I know that God exists? Because I stand in His presence, and hear those solemn words 'I AM' as they fall from His lips. Seeing and hearing, these are my testimonies. The eye and the ear are my witnesses; I mean the eye and the ear of the soul.......It is these two that help us to know and follow God in India to-day, not books. Our ideas of the Divinity are not abstract and intellectual, but are based upon direct and intuitive knowledge. Our faith in God is not so much a conception as a spiritual perception."—(Page 204).

"This is reckoned the highest devotion, that the worshipper has seen his God in his own heart.......To gratify this national hankering after a visible Divinity, the Lord of Heaven has vouchsafed that sublime message, 'I AM', and revealed Himself as a Present Reality....... With this message in our hand we may go forth as missionaries, and all citadels of idolatry will yield to its power."—(Page 206).

"Perception is only one part of the *faith* which has been revealed to us. The other part is hearing,......Will He make us depend upon the dead letter of books and upon *earthly teachers* who misguide us, and withhold from us that living voice which alone can silence doubts, proclaim the truth, and cheer the believer? This cannot be."—(Page 208).

"God speaks to everyone of us.......But they (the Scriptures) were never written by His own hand, and are not, therefore, to be accepted as His direct inspiration. They are only instructive narratives of what the Lord said and did in the lives of prophets and saints....For saving knowledg and the truth that giveth eternal life, we must repair

to the very Fountain-head of all inspiration, and not the channels through which it flows. To each man, saint or sinner, the Holy Spirit *speaks directly* as the In-dwelling Teacher.......Can the wisest and best of men sanctify us in the absence of God's voice? Nay, who but the All-Merciful Saviour selects and commends proper books and men for our guidance?......It is not they (books and men) who bring us to Him, it is He who brings us to them.......His revelation is not made once for all.......He speaks always and unceasingly, for man needs a continued revelation."—(Page 209)

"Through love man is saved—thus saith the Lord....... True love is salvation......Love removes barriers of selfishness, brings different minds together, and binds them....... By love I mean that holy passion which removes all differences that estrange men and reduces a multiplicity of souls to *unity*. By it ten souls, yea, ten thousand souls, are so amalgamated as to form an indivisible unity."—(Page 211)

"If ye love God with true love, and if ye love all men with true love, ye shall be saved. This is ancient and universal religion.......We may cherish the deepest sentiment of filial attachment to our Heavenly Father, and yet true love may be wanting.......There can be no love without *harmony* of will. Discordant inclinations prevent union. No man loves God whose will wars with His holy will......A complete sacrifice of self, and all that appertains to it, is essential. The loving devotee surrenders himself to God, and lives in him."—(p. 214)

"That loving communion which makes man one with God is the chief feature of the *new dispensation* granted unto us;....."(p: 216) "True charity may be defined as the

immersion of self in the wide sea of humanity—the identification of the individual with the entire human race." (p. 217) "Catholic charity makes no distinction between friends and foes, between countrymen and foreigners between kinsmen and the outside world, but embraces all mankind indiscriminately."—(p. 218)

Then Keshab goes on preaching: "All men are brothers and women sisters.......Charity does *not* begin at home.......But true charity hates the utilitarian process, and will not obey the world's dictates as to where it ought to begin and where it ought to end. Charity goes where it is divinely called...'To err is human, to forgive is divine.' This is what the ethics of the world teaches, The doctrine of heaven is 'To forgive is human', to love is divine'.... Infinite love is above anger and resentment....I (Keshab) have the very authority of God Himself for this gospel of love. The doctrine laid before the people bears the stamp of the Divine seal...I am not imposing upon men novel ideas manufactured in my own mind; but said what I have heard from the lips of the Divine Teacher.... Here is no deception. I am not drawing upon my imagination, but am stating a fact and a reality....Believers in all ages have heard this same truth in their own hearts, and to-day it is possible for every sinner like myself to hear it by faith if he is so inclined and prepared.... Love is the fulfilling of all religion and morality; love is redemption, saith the Lord....Accept, then, the gospel of love as the gospel of universal redemption."

"In India religion has degenerated into hero-worship. How many misguided fanatics have asserted preposterous claims to the position and privileges of spiritual guides! How many really good and estimable devotees have been

exalted by their disciples to the rank of infallible teachers! How the worship of ten thousand *gurus*, some of them worst and meanest of men, has deluged the country with error, falsehood and corruption! Looking upon this painful spectacle, my heart naturally shudders and recoils from the thought of setting up as a teacher. I shrink back from the awful responsibilities which attach to the position of a religious guide. Nay, without any hesitation or equivocation I can emphatically assure you that I am *not* a teacher, and *will* never be a teacher unto my countrymen.......I claim neither humility nor honour before my countrymen......He who regards me as a teacher is guilty of a lie, and a blasphemy, inasmuch as he sets aside the authority of God, and establishes in its place the authority of man."

"The very creed my mouth has preached to-day disowns me and points to God alone as the source of all truth......Accept the Lord as your only Master and Teacher and let His spirit within you judge every word that comes from man."—(Page 236)

The publisher of the Indian Edition of the 'Life of Ramkrishna' by Romain Rolland criticising this lecture in his Note 2 at page 328 says, "But the lecture itself contains little or nothing of the teaching he proclaimed later as the New Dispensation. It was devoted to the consideration of the proof of Divine existence and certain moral qualities which he said constituted a special dispensation of God at the critical period of India's history. There was no mention of the harmony of religions." This point has been considered while dealing with his note in another chapter. It, however, appears that the publisher has not either gone through this lecture

carefully or understood it fully. We may conveniently repeat here what Mr. B. Mazumdar remarked—"Perhaps they (followers of Ramkrishna) do not know what is the creed of the New Dispensation." The publisher appears to have not understood it. A really sincere *Sadhak* (man of devotion) whose object is to seek truth and to worship God with clean and pure heart, and who is not a mere propagandist will find no difficulty in tracing the ideas and principles of the New Dispensation in this lecture. One who is determined not to see, it is difficult to make him see. Of course, it is not the only occasion when Keshab spoke on this point. It one studies his lectures, sermons, prayers and writings from 1860 to March 1875 carefully and with unbiassed mind he will at once find all the ideas of the New Dispensation including the idea of harmony of religions in them, taken together. It requires a good deal of labour, application and patience to go through those voluminous expositions. It should appear also from the references given above that the followers of Ramkrishna have absolutely no ground to say that Keshab was in need of learning the ideas of New Dispensation from Ramkrishna or from any human being. The attempts to make out that Keshab and all the Brahmos were so many blockheads (in Ramkrishna-Vivekananada publications) are rather silly.

The publisher's attack on the statement of Romain Rolland, *viz.*, "Keshab's lecture on the FUTURE CHURCH delivered in 1869 is another proof of Keshab's early conception of the harmony of religions", is most childish to say the least. It exhibits the publisher's incapacity to deal with serious spiritual matters. Keshab's lecture was in English, If Romain Rolland was ignorant of the

English language, it must have been translated to him by one who was well conversant with the English language and who, it may be presumed, understands that language more thoroughly than we Indians, the publisher included. If the publisher fails to find the original idea of harmony of religions in this lecture he is to be simply pitied. It is useless to argue with one who is determined not to understand or having understood is reluctant to admit it. After all an apprehension of religious truth is as much a matter of keen spiritual intuition as of a regenerated heart. Even the Omnipotence of God would not make one perceive truths of religion if the preparation of the heart be wanting. Even in Keshab's essay "Religion of Love" penned so far back as 1860, if read carefully, it is easy to find the conception of the harmony of religions there also.

The perusal of Keshab's Bengali Sermons of 22nd January and 23rd January of 1871 (Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. II, pp. 32 and 38) will repay the effort. There will be found the principal ingredients of the New Dispensation, Harmony of Religions, Universal Religion, etc.

The declaration of Keshab that "all religions are true" is a unique one. No one as yet has declared it. Some have no doubt said that there is truth in every religion. In his article "what is the Eclecticism of the New Dispensation?" in the *Sunday Mirror* of 23rd October, 1881, he explained the doctrine "ALL RELIGIONS ARE TRUE". There was no mention of or discourse on this point in any other quarter. Nor exactly this thing is to be found in the Ramkrishna literatures. Keshab was misunderstood on this point even by Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri, who levelled his criticism against this article in his

'History of the Brahmo Samaj', omitting, however, the most essential portion of the article and sentences, *viz.*, "*If there are untruths they are grafted on them by men, they cannot be God's and we have nothing to do with them.*" By leaving out this portion, and thereby distorting Keshab's purpose and intention, Pandit Shastri unfortunately did injustice to Keshab and to his own conscience.

Keshab Chandra Sen as stated above, on 22nd October 1881, published in the 'Sunday Mirror' his doctrine *All Religions are True*. Vivekananda was still in the Brahmo Samaj then and he used to come to Keshab frequently. Vivekananda (Narendra) went to America in 1893 and then he said there, "We accept all religions to be true" or, in other words, he repeated the doctrine proclaimed by Keshab so far back as October 1881. Mr. Nagendra Nath Gupta in his article in the 'Modern Review' of 1928, Vol. I, p. 662, has evidently made a serious mistake by saying that Vivekananda was the first man to preach this doctrine. Mr. Satyendra Mazumdar, like an *unlearned* Pandit, has said that Keshab learnt this doctrine from Ramkrishna. In 1881 Ramkrishna had very few disciples. * Swami Saradananda says that Ramkrishna's disciples mainly gathered round him from the middle of 1883 as already stated, *i.e.*, a few months before Keshab's death and since when he was very ill. Mr. S. Mazumdar does not say in whose presence Ramkrishna taught this cult to Keshab. He himself had no personal knowledge, nor did he name

* Vide pp. 202—205 of the Life of Ramkrishna by Romain Rolland Indian Edition—Adwaita Asram, Mayavat, Almorah, Himalayas 1930.

anybody who had such knowledge. On the other hand we, some of the followers of Keshab, who had come into direct contact with both Keshab and Ramkrishna are still living and we definitely know that the idea originated in Keshab and he was therefore subjected to scathing criticism from a section of our own Brahmo community and from Europeans like Miss Collett. From 1875 to 1883 many Brahmos used to visit Ramkrishna; from none of them we ever heard anything like the story given by Mr. S. Mazumdar in his "Life of Vivekananda". Evidently this story is a product of imagination and is an item in furtherance of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda propaganda.

Keshab or even a stripling of his fold would not worship a human being as an *avatar* on any account. We, however, find that man-worship is encouraged in the cult of Ramkrishna. Ramkrishna is considered as an *avatar* and his picture and image are worshipped with flowers, etc., like other Hindu gods and goddesses. Ramkrishna's wife and Vivekananda are also worshipped as gods. No Brahmo since the time of Maharshi Debendra Nath up to now even ever thought of worshipping a man as God, or take part in or encourage any idolatrous ceremony. This is due to the synthesis of the spirit of Islam with higher Hinduism which is conspicuous only by its absence in the evergrowing idolaters of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda cult, in spite of the loud protestations about achievements in the field of synthesis of religion. As it has been already said Keshab's only *guru* was God Himself, and Keshab himself did not ever claim to be a *guru* to anybody. For fuller idea on this point the reader is recommended

the perusal of the two volumes of his English prayers and the English translation of the chapters 'Independence', 'Disciple-attitude' *(Swadhinata, Shishyaprakriti)* and 'Misreading My Life' in his *Jeevan Veda*, which form a separate chapter in this book. His other and most comprehensive utterances are in Bengali and so the non-Bengali speakers are deprived of the beauty of the same. Taking advantage of this fact the propagandists outside India are broadcasting false and manufactured stories and misleading the people of those countries with misrepresentations.

Keshab's conviction was that for reaching the feet of God no books and human teachers were necessary. He found that Ramkrishna, an illiterate person without the help of any human teacher or Shastras, had attained such pure and sincere devotion to God and had become a *bhakta* in the fullest sense of the word. Keshab found in Ramkrishna an illustration of the ideal he was cherishing from a long time, so naturally he was attracted to him. Two *bhaktas* came in contact with each other; necessarily the flow of *bhakti* swelled and both of them by this flow were mutually benefited, at the same time keeping their own creeds intact. The question of *guru* and *shishya* thus cannot arise at all.

Here we can quote Mr. Manilal Parekh's estimate with advantage. "It was when Keshab had made considerable progress in this new path that he came to form in 1875 that acquaintance with Ramkrishna Paramhansa which soon ripened into lasting friendship to the great advantage of both of them, of the Brahmo Samaj and of the whole Hindustan. Although unknown to fame as Ramkrishna was at that time, Keshab soon saw what a

wonderful jewel was hidden under the rough and even repellent exterior of the half-dressed, insane-looking and untutored man. It is only a genius that can recognise a genius, for among the many persons of high and noble character that Ramkrishna had already seen there was hardly one who understood the worth of that remarkable man. With Keshab it was different. In spite of a world of outward differences, both of them found in each other a kindred spirit, in short, nothing less than a man of God. As for Ramkrishna he represented or rather incarnated in himself a great deal of mediæval Hinduism. A Vedantist in belief that he was, he abounded in the Bhakti of the Bhagvat type. He had spiritualized the whole of Hinduism by the very simplicity of his genius and character. The meeting with such a man at a time when Keshab was passing through what was nothing less than a crisis could not but be of very great help to him. It was like adding fuel to the fire that had already taken possession of him with his fresh vigour. As was the case with his most teachable spirit always, he readily learnt whatever was good and new in the thought and practice of Ramkrishna and thereby decidedly deepened his character. Their relations were those of the best of friends who understood each other perfectly and exercised mutual influence. The members of the Brahmo Samaj soon came to know the Paramhansa, and the people also came to know him through a series of articles written by Keshab under the caption 'A Hindu Saint' in the *Indian Mirror*. The chief effect of this friendship on Keshab is to be found in the idea of the MOTHERHOOD OF GOD which took an *increasing* hold upon him from this time forth, and more so after the second schism. The

idea was not quite new to Keshab but it certainly did receive much emphasis from contact with Ramkrishna."

We may add that the meeting of these two *bhaktas* was providential. It is absurd to say that Keshab was quite incompetent to understand Ramkrishna's utterances. Both Keshab and Ramkrishna understood each other sufficiently. Only the followers of Ramkrishna could not understand correctly either Ramkrishna or Keshab. Had they tried to do so in a reverent mood, seeking light from above to lead them aright and not followed the ways of propagandists, Heaven would certainly have helped them to see things in their true colours. We should also add that, as Rev. Girishchandra remarked, contact with Ramkrishna gave an impetus to the diffusion and acceptance of the emphasis on the Motherhood of God, in and by Brahmos in general.

PROPAGANDA IN INDIA AND SOME MORE ABSURDITIES

Though it has been sufficiently shown that it was not a fact that Ramkrishna was Keshab's *guru* it would be convenient to note a few more of Keshab's utterances to show that it was not consistent with his principles, nay, it was impossible for him to treat a human being, however great he might be, as his *Guru*. Let us begin with his English Prayers:

'English Prayer', *Pt. II.*—'The Minister', July 6, 1879, pp. 101—103.

In 1879—Keshab and Ramkrishna were on very intimate terms. Had Ramkrishna been Keshab's *Guru*, Keshab could not have made the following utterances in that year:

The Lord saith:

"They need no intercessor, no interpreter, let them come and speak to Me direct, I will have no mediator. To the humblest of my children I shall grant an audience, and the poorest sinner is privileged to speak to me."

"My nineteenth century dispensation dispenses with mediatorial redemption. I will have none to stand between Me and my children."

"No man can fully explain the deep truths of the spirit-world, unless the Holy Spirit reveals them to each individual."—(Page 141, dated 7th December, 1879.)

"Ye shall always remain independent, and never bow the neck in slavish adoration before any created being. Disciples and followers of man! Strange that ye should use before Me such odious expressions. Ye are not man's disciples, but Mine. Stoop to no man as your Master, nor acknowledge any human authority as equal to Mine."—(Page 142, dated 21st December, 1879.)

"Honour and love your Minister as your servant. I, the Lord, will judge him. Ye shall follow the spirit of his teachings *so far as I direct you,* but no further."—(Page 143, dated 21st December, 1879.)

"That your Minister or any other person shall stand before you as an infallible prophet or mediator, and that ye shall adore him, glorify him or flatter him as the Pope of Theism is what I thoroughly hate and must endeavour to prevent. Everything in My dispensation shall be tested by science, and the pretensions of all ambitious and pushing leaders shall be exposed and put down."—(Page 145, dated 4th January, 1880.)

In 1870 while in England Keshab said: "God Himself told me this; no book, no teacher but God

Himself, in the secret recesses of my heart." (K. C. Sen in England, Vol. I, 2nd Ed. p. 85, 3rd Ed. p. 136.)

In his farewell Soiree (12th September, 1870—K. C. Sen in England, 3rd Edition p. 472), he distinctly said that Christ was not God, but a *Bhakta* only.

In innumerable places Keshab spoke in that strain. The readers are recommended to go through

Jeeban-Veda (English and Bengali) Chapters on "Independence", "Always Learning" and "Misreading My Life";

Sebaker Nivedan (Bengali)—Pts. I and II, pp. 49, 59, 97-98, 99, 111; Pt. IV, pp. 197, 198, 203, 205; Pt. V, pp. 44, 51;

Acharyer Upadesh (Bengali)—Pt. III, p. 105; Pt. VIII, p. 256; Pt. IX, pp. 2, 6, 121, 197, 246; Pt. X, pp. 33, 242, 305;

Dainik Prarthana (Kamal-Kutir) (Bengali)—Pt. IV, pp. 15, 17, 43, 44, 45, 49;
Pt. V—"Acharya grahan", p. 9.

Read also "The New Dispensation" (English), Vol. II, pp. 145 and 146;

"Basis of Brahmosim", 1860, Essays, p. 30;

Minister's (Keshab's) charge to his Missionaries (P. C. Mazumdar's 'Life and Teachings of Keshab', p. 228 Second Edition, 3rd Edition p. 257.)

Keshab, who from 1860, throughout consistently hated *Gurubad*, idolatry and *Avatarbad*, is said by the story-tellers to have worshipped Ramkrishna's feet with flowers ("Life of Ramkrishna", Himalayan Series, p. 364; also Indian Edition of the "Life of Ramkrishna" by Romain Rolland, p. 189). A more absurd story is not even conceivable. It is a wonder how even Romain Rolland could

mention it in his book. Of course in his case there is this excuse that he was misinformed by interested persons and propagandists. None of the constant companions of Keshab knows it. The most absurd part of the story is that "the dying Keshab, shaken by a mortal cough, holding on to the walls, supporting himself by the furniture, coming to cast himself at the feet of Ramkrishna." From personal knowledge we can say, and all the followers of Keshab and even the public knew, that the doctor's strict order at that time was that Keshab must not receive any visitor except only a selected few like Ramkrishna, Maharshi Debendranath, etc. They were allowed to see him in his drawing room, but surely none of the scanty number of Ramkrishna's disciples of those days could have been allowed there. Moreover, Keshab's people would certainly not have allowed him to leave his bed in the way described to reach Ramkrishna's feet on 28th November 1883, that is only about five weeks before his death. He had hardly then strength enough to move in that way.

This story was taken by Romain Rolland from the "Gospel of Sri Ramkrishna", which was an English rendering of "M's" (Mahendra Nath Gupta's) 'Sri Ramkrishna Kathamrita'. The author of the Himalayan Series, 'Life of Sri Ramkrishna' was not satisfied with this story even. He says Keshab took Ramkrishna to his family sanctuary* and there worshipped his feet with flowers. He had admittedly no personal knowledge, nor could he name any trustworthy witness who saw

* Located in the ground floor, while the patient himself was on the first floor!—*Author*.

anything like this. None of the inmates ot the house or associates of Keshab has seen anything of the sort. This is another instance of the monumental mendacity that has always been the sheet anchor of those that are ready to sacrifice even their conscience to a propagandist spirit. This reminds us of our past experiences in law courts where it was of every-day occurrence to find that parties who had absolutely no case would concoct and fabricate evidence to give support to their false cases. The feet-worshipping story mentioned above was just of this type. Even Keshab's worst enemies in the Brahmo Samaj did not level such a charge against him.

It should not be forgotten that Keshab's conduct has always been the subject of the closest scrutiny by many in and outside the Brahmo Samaj. The misinformed criticism that grew round the inoffensive *Bhakti* movement at Monghyr is an instance in point. If Keshab had done anything that had the faintest resemblance to Man-worship, it would have found a place in a number of Brahmo organs. But no reference is found anywhere except in the imagination of those who have studied the method of deification as a fine art. So the story may be dismissed with the contempt that it deserves.

Bijoy Krishna Goswami and Narendra Dutt (Vivekananda) were Brahmos formerly. They reverted to idolatry and were extolled by Ramkrishna and the orthodox Hindus for the simple fact of this conversion to idolatry. But Keshab, a firm believer in *nirakara Brahma*, could not show such fickleness, weakness and unsteadiness of mind. Keshab wanted to please God and not man.

Now, Mahendra Nath Gupta of *Sri Ramkrishna*

Kathamrita was responsible for another similar story which appeared in the *Basumati*. Our friend Rev. Preo Nath Mullick, who was in constant touch with both Ramkrishna and Keshab, protested; and then Mahendra Babu, the "M" modified his story and explained the matter in a letter which will speak for itself. An English translation of the letter is given below. The original letter was published in the "Dharmatattwa."

"M" wrote the following letter to some revered friend of ours:

1st Ashar, 1332 B.S.
(June 15th, 1925.)

"I have gone through the 'Dharmatattwa'. We have not written in the 'Basumati' that venerable Keshab Babu worshipped Paramhansa Deva (who was a man) as God as is being done by his disciples: I believe, he did not do it in that spirit. We believe Keshab Babu worshipped Paramhansa Deva in the same way as he worshipped Bijoy Babu and Prankissen Babu bending his knees before them, *i.e.*, he worshipped Him (God) who dwells in the heart of *Bhakta*, the Indwelling Spirit, and not the *Bhakta* himself (the man). *(Vide* 'Dharmatattwa' at page 110.)

Will you please publish this letter in the 'Dharmatattwa' and tender my *namaskars* to Priya Babu.

(Sd.) 'Sree M'."

"*P.S.*—Paramhansa Deva told Keshab Babu on board the steamer that Bhakta's heart was God's parlour.

(Sd.) 'Sree M'."

It must be repeated here that there is nothing in the world more preposterously absurd and false than this invention made by the followers of Ramkrishna. They can easily turn day into night.

Swami Saradananda modifies this story a little and says Keshab used to touch the feet of Ramkrishna and take the dust therefrom. There is, so far as we know, no evidence on this point either. However, even if we take it for granted, that would not show that Ramkrishna was Keshab's Guru. Keshab occasionally used to bow down before his own disciples even (*vide* 'Acharya Keshabchandra', Centenary Edition, p. 1089).

In his prayer in the Brahmo Samaj on *1st May, 1874*, Keshab says the day we place the dust of the feet of our brothers and sisters on our head, that day whatever we say becomes the word of *dharma* (religion). By this he did not mean that those brothers and sisters would be his *gurus*. The placing of the dust of the feet of a person on one's head is an expression of reverence and regard customarily shown in oriental lands to one's elder relations (grand-parents, parents, uncles and aunts, school teachers, brothers and sisters, etc.). It is an expression of humility and self-depreciation. Those in particular who cultivate *Bhakti* consider self-debasement as a part of their discipline (*e.g.*, Chaitanya and his school), and practise this attitude as a part of their *sadhan* even towards ordinary people. So the procedure does not necessarily imply acceptance of a person as one's *guru*.

In the Himalayan Series 'Life of Ramkrishna' it is thus said (p. 364):

"But Keshab, it must be said, could not assimilate

Sri Ramkrishna's ideal *in toto*. For the New Dispensation which he preached was an eclectic religion gathering the best things (of course rejecting the bad) of several religions and *loosely* combining them into an aggregate. It was piecing together something of everything ; whereas Sri Ramkrishna's ideal was to allow everyone to follow his own course, whatever it might be—sincerely and wholeheartedly—without disturbing others in the least."

It is clear that the writer does not understand what the New Dispensation is, nor what Harmony and Synthesis (Samanvaya) of religions are. Does he naively say that Keshab by rejecting the bad things of every religion could not assimilate Ramkrishna's ideal? Of course Keshab had no desire to take even what was superstitious and inconsistent in Ramkrishna. As from every religion he took what was good or God-given, and rejected what was added by man, so he took and assimilated what was good in Ramkrishna. He could certainly not adopt the idolatry of Ramkrishna as Narendra did. Keshab was too strong to submit to it.

The ideal of Ramkrishna given above is not Samanvaya Dharma. It is not that Keshab could not understand what he heard from Ramkrishna, but on the other hand, it may be that Ramkrishna did not understand the utterances of Keshab about Navavidhan although he understood Keshab in other things to a great extent. To understand Navavidhan is not an easy thing. The immediate associates of Keshab even could not understand it thoroughly. Keshab said it might take centuries to understand it properly.

The argument of the followers of Ramkrishna amounts to saying that contradictory statements may be all true.

The logic of this is worthless. It puts the theists and the atheists on the same footing. From the standpoint of the people of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement, it would appear that the members of the Brahmo Samaj, Keshab and Maharshi included, were all too thickheaded to understand the tenets of Ramkrishna in their entirety. Maharshi Debendra Nath refused to meet Ramkrishna and in doing so must be looked upon as a very cautious person! Had he given access, his "Brahmo Dharmer Vyakhyan", etc., delivered in the forties of the last century might also have been ascribed to Ramkrishna! What an escape!

To us it is more than apparent that the present disciples of Ramkrishna, themselves fail to understand his teachings and to undertake *sadhans* consistent with such. We firmly believe that Ramkrishna was a genuine, spiritually advanced soul. We are conscious that our brethren of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement have done a good deal of philanthropic work, for which the country will remain ever grateful to them. But when we turn our eyes to the spiritual side of their activities, we fail to discover any real and genuine progress in the vocal section of that body. We fear these so-called disciples of Ramkrishna did not understand Ramkrishna at all. Had they done so they would have progressed in spiritual growth immensely and would not have spent their energies in belittling others in order to extol those whom they call their masters and in manufacturing stories to throw dust in the eyes of the public.

The overzealous propagandists seem to seek to establish that whatever good there was in the Brahmo

Samaj and in Keshab, came to them from Ramkrishna, including those which were in existence before 1875.

An attempt was made by Swami Saradananda, as said before, to show that before Keshab and Ramkrishna met for the first time in 1875, there was nothing of religion in the Brahmo Samaj, and it was till then a place for goondaism (ruffianism) and the Swami even did not hesitate to put in the mouth of a devout man like Rev. P. C. Mazumdar that "the Brahmos were engaged in goondaism before they met Ramkrishna". Thus according to the Swami the beautiful, solemn, lucid, sincere, touching and sweet sermons of Keshab and Pratap before March 1875 were nothing but instructions for committing dacoity, murder, theft and other sorts of goondaism.

The followers of Ramkrishna had had recourse to tremendous exaggerations and inventions of ridiculous stories to make out their case. But commonsense and intelligence have not as yet left the world altogether. Truth shall ultimately prevail sooner or later.

T. N. Sanyal's Hymns

The Apostle of Song, Rev. T. N. Sanyal, joined the Brahmo missionary body in 1867. His musical genius became a source of wonderful attraction to the public, and Keshab's prayers furnished the perennial fountain from which our beloved Singing Apostle drew his inspiration for new hymns sweet, true and deep. Swami Saradananda got this clue and in order to make an attempt to connect Ramkrishna with some of the sublime hymns of Rev. Troylokya Nath Sanyal, invents a story that from enquiry he came to know that Troylokya

Nath got his inspiration from Ramkrishna in respect of five of such hymns (page 25 of the Swami's book). This is news to us. None of our Samaj knows it. Swami Saradananda admittedly has no personal knowledge in this matter. He says *on enquiry* he came to know it. He does not say from whom he made the alleged enquiry. Nor does he say when and where he made such an enquiry. Rev. P. C. Mazumdar and Rev. Troylokya Nath, who were so enthusiastic about Ramkrishna, would certainly have mentioned such a matter had it really been a fact. On the other hand, we feel sure that the inspiration behind these hymns would be found in Keshab's sermons and prayers.

It is easy to exploit a dead person and safe too. This story was not told as long as Rev. Troylokya was alive. He cannot now come back to contradict it.

Rev. Mazumdar in his book says:—"Almost everyday he (Troylokya) improvised tunes and composed new hymns extempore to suit the sermons and prayers which Keshab delivered." But he does not say anything like this in respect of Ramkrishna. Had that been a fact Mazumdar would never have omitted it. This story like that of 'goondaism' is a piece of fabrication in support of the mischievous propaganda started by the followers of Ramkrishna.

We repeat that without wasting their energies in this way it would have been profitable to try to understand, in the proper spirit, the spiritual growth in Ramkrishna's life and his *sadhan*, and to try to assimilate the same in their own lives. They should remember that there is one God,—not a Ramkrishna-God nor a Narendra-God,—but an Infinite God Who cannot be deceived by any amount of mean efforts and propaganda.

Another similar story has been presented to the public by them. It was said that once Narendranath (Vivekananda) with his friends went to see Maharshi Debendranath at the Adi Brahmo Samaj and there the latter found in the person of Narendra the signs of yogi and advised him to practise yoga. It is unlikely, in the first instance, that the Maharshi would receive a visitor at the Adi Brahmo Samaj. The Maharshi used to receive visitors at his house only. Then, he was not a believer in any signs or marks in anybody's person suggesting yogi's or similar nature. Moreover, we have not heard this story from anyone who used to be with the Maharshi always. We are unable to swallow this pill. It is evidently a step in furtherance of their propaganda.

Many other queer and absurd stories were invented and broadcasted by this Propaganda Company for the entertainment of unthoughtful readers. In order to magnify Vivekananda, Swami Saradananda comes with another curious story. He wants us to believe that Ramkrishna said: "I see that with one single power Keshab has become world-renowned. But Narendra possesses eighteen such powers to full extent. I further found that within Keshab and Bijoy there is illumination through light of true knowledge. Afterwards looking at Narendra I found that the sun of light itself has risen within him and that there was not even a trace of illusion or spiritual blindness within him." This is a strange statement from God Himself—the sun, the source of all truth!

In another place in his book we find that Ramkrishna said that Narendra was a thousand-petalled lotus, while others had ten, fifteen or at the utmost twenty petals.

Again Swami Saradananda relates that Ramkrishna said that Narendra was Visible God-incarnate (*Sakshat Narayan*). Ramkrishna was a Brahmin and a Hindu, and Narendra was a Kayastha, and as such a Sudra (not Kshattriya as R. Rolland incorrectly says in his book). Still Swami Saradananda says that in the case of Narendra, Ramkrishna did not observe the rule of not taking the *uchchhista* (the remains of another's meal left on the plate) of a Sudra. And we are to believe it!

In spite of the propagandists' efforts to show to the public that Keshab and his followers were dunces and had not the capacity of understanding the teachings of Ramkrishna who was admittedly "without any book-learning", still at places Keshab's intellect is admitted though modified by a contradictory and absurd story along with it.

The following is taken from the Himalayan Series "Life of Sri Ramkrishna":

"In March 1875 an important event happened in the life of Sri Ramkrishna, which was destined to produce far-reaching consequences. It was the meeting with the celebrated Brahmo leader and preacher Keshab Chandra Sen, undoubtedly the greatest figure of the Brahmo movement at this time. He was a great scholar and an eloquent orator, and was of an exceedingly religious turn of mind. Beginning as a lieutenant of Maharshi Debendranath Thakur, he soon became the leader of the forward section of the Brahmos and founded the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj. His character and attainments made him the idol of a large number of ardent truth-seekers, and his influence on the educated youths of the day was unbounded. Hearing about his

piety, Sri Ramkrishna felt inclined to visit him. He had seen him long ago from a distance at the Adi Brahmo Samaj, when the latter was meditating, and had at once remarked that he was the only boy there whose meditation was successful."

It is followed by this:

"It is even said on reliable authority that he (Keshab) took the Master (Ramkrishna) to his meditation room and there worshipped his feet with flowers."

Here we may conveniently quote from page 279 of Mazumdar's 'Life and Teachings of K. C. Sen', Second Edition:

"He (Keshab) completed his forty-fifth year on 19th November 1883 and his birthday was celebrated with great pomp and rejoicing......A slight improvement in his health continued. He received the visits of the Bishop of Calcutta, Paramhansa Ramkrishna and the venerable Debendra Nath Tagore. His conversation with them was deeply spiritual, *specially with Debendra Nath*, upon whom he always looked as his spiritual father. *He bowed at the latter's feet*, took his hand and put it on his head, as if courting his benediction. Debendra Nath lovingly embraced him, and talked to him of the mercy of the Heavenly Father as realised in the time of danger and disease. Keshab warmly responded to every sentiment and all his visitors parted from him hopefully, seeing how strong in spirit he felt." (The italics are ours.)

There is no mention here of Keshab's bowing at the feet of Ramkrishna. It is very significant. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar had no motive to suppress it. Pratap himself was a great admirer of Ramkrishna. Any

amount of exploiting dead men, like Bijoy and others, would not help ultimately the Ramkrishnaites to pass off manufactured stories for facts. (We have dealt with this matter in another part of this book.)

Again, in the Himalayan Series 'Life of Ramkrishna' we find these:

"But, Keshab, it must be said, could not assimilate Sri Ramkrishna's ideal *in toto*......"

"One day the Master (Ramkrishna) said to Keshab in fun, 'Keshab, you charm people with your eloquence. Let me, too, hear something from you.' Keshab modestly replied, 'I must not be vending needles in a blacksmith's shop. Rather I should hear something from you. *It is only your words that I repeat to people, and they appreciate them so much*'."

We are concerned with the last portion (italicized) only. It is admitted, and very rightly so, by the writer of Ramkrishna's life that Keshab was a pious man and a truthful man too. It is an undisputed fact. We cannot disbelieve Keshab when he says that the Indwelling God only was his teacher and through God alone he used to solve his difficulties, that he had no faith in man, that he himself would not be any man's *guru*, nor would he make a *guru* of any human being. So can anyone believe all the absurd stories told about Keshab to show that he was a disciple of Ramkrishna and that he had no capacity to understand the teachings of Ramkrishna in their entirety, and he used to worship Ramkrishna's feet with flowers? Vivekananda, so long as he was a Brahmo, had, it would seem, necessarily bade goodbye to his intelligence and commonsense, but when in the presence of Ramkrishna he reverted to

idolatry, his intelligence returned in full fledge, and he could, therefore, understand fully all that Ramkrishna said and uttered. Had Keshab returned to idolatry, then, according to these propagandists, we may presume, his capacity to understand Ramkrishna's utterances *in toto* would have appeared all at once by miracle; and he could have been, like Vivekananda, sometimes a theist, sometimes an atheist, sometimes a *Sohang* (I am God), and sometimes an idolater. But Keshab was a firm rock and not a feather. He remained a Brahmo, a worshipper of the Formless God, all along from his boyhood till his death.

A question has been raised as to why the Navavidhan was not proclaimed before 1880. From the extracts given in the previous pages it is as clear as anything that though the formal proclamation was deferred till 1880, it was being developed and approached all along since 1860. The Navavidhan, following the rules of evolution, passed through different stages of development, and it did make a sufficient headway in 1874, as already shown before, one year before the first meeting of Ramkrishna and Keshab.

Romain Rolland says that Keshab "began to proclaim" (p. 181) or "began to preach" (p. 179) the New Dispensation in 1875, and the publisher of the Indian Edition of his book takes exception to it. Romain Rolland was no doubt inaccurate in one respect. He should have said not "*in* 1875" but "*from before* 1875". He cannot be blamed, however, as he could not have access to the English and Bengali Sermons and Prayers of 1874 or of previous years, otherwise his statement would have been more accurate.

The so-called indirect evidence of the 'editor' of the weekly 'Navavidhan' (quoted by the publisher of the Indian Edition of Romain Rolland's book) is really the evidence of the *acting* editor and not of Rev. P. L. Sen, the permanent editor of that time. Rev. P. L. Sen's views will be read in another chapter of this book. The acting editor's "evidence" also does not warrant the conclusion inferred by the publisher.

Keshab was waiting for the fittest time for the formal proclamation; and after the schism that removed the rationalistic obstructionists on the occasion of the Cooch-Bihar marriage, and after the agitation due to it had somewhat subsided, Navavidhan was proclaimed in January 1880.

With regard to the reply of the acting editor of the 'Navavidhan' it should be said that he gave enough materials in his answer (see Navavidhan, pp. 4—6, August 29, and p. 6, September 12, 1929) to show that

(1) Keshab began to *preach* the New Dispensation long before 1875;

(2) he gave indications of his views even as early as 1860 to 1866 in his eclectic lectures and sermons, and in causing the compilation of the *Shloka Sangraha* from the various scriptures of the established religions;

(3) the characteristic teachings called the "Navavidhan" consist of the acceptance, harmony and synthesis of all religions on the basis of a doctrine of Immediacy or Direct Inspiration and the recognition of a law of active participation in the spiritual inheritance of the churches and the nations;

(4) that there are enough passages in the lecture of January, 1875 'Behold the Light of Heaven in India' to indicate the above teachings in such phrases as "all-inclusive not exclusive", "not indeed a new and singular creed, but a new development of by-gone dispensations", "a consummation of the teachings of the past, it sows the seed of future dispensations", "the word of God shall go on adapting and developing itself", etc.

Keshab was admittedly an extraordinary man and he was a great power. Through him the Navavidhan was proclaimed. Even Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri was forced to admit, rather reluctantly, in 1910, that this proclamation was a great event. Keshab's utterances were full of inspiration. Naturally there was a temptation on the part of the followers of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda to try to make people believe that whatever Keshab said was borrowed from Ramkrishna in order to belittle Keshab and to magnify Ramkrishna and Vivekananda, their masters. Necessarily distortions of facts, misstatements, and misrepresentations became imperative. Thus with the genuine and beautiful sayings of Ramkrishna a ship-load of manufactured and adulterated commodities are being mixed up with which poor Ramkrishna had actually no connection.

If Keshab, who was admittedly a religious genius and a *Bhakta*, recognised in Ramkrishna his *Bhagavan* or God, would he not proclaim to the world from the house-top that he had found the Almighty in human shape in Dakshineshwar? Does he not stand condemned before all the nations of the time on the ground of

denying them the opportunity of meeting their God also at Dakshineshwar?

KESHAB AS A TARGET

As Keshab became a towering power, he became the common target for attack from all sides. He introduced several reforms, social and of other kinds, and put his axe to the root of idolatry, caste and intemperance, for which he was disliked and hated by the orthodox Hindus, as well as by those who had gone astray. He was very much misunderstood ; some people took him to be anti-national, as Theosophists and latterday Arya Samajists, though in fact he fought hard against denationalisation and saved his countrymen from wholesale conversion to Christianity as Swami Dayananda Saraswati frankly admitted.

The Christian missionaries found in Keshab an enemy who proved an obstacle to their conversion work. He had, of course, the highest regard for Christ, and the Christians erroneously thought that he would swell the list of converts. They were, however, greatly disappointed and some, like Miss Collett and a few other Christian friends of his, became his sore enemies. Keshab had the hardihood to declare that Christ was not God but a human being and a great *Bhakta*. Miss Collett thenceforth stretched her helping hand to the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj to antagonise Keshab.

In the Brahmo Samaj also Keshab had his bitter enemies. Publications like the "Brahmo Public Opinion", "New Dispensation and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj", Pandit Shastri's "History of the Brahmo Samaj", etc., contain the vilest abuses of Keshab. The spirit and taste

exhibited in the same are left to the judgment of the readers. They wanted to belittle Keshab in every possible way. For a fuller knowledge on this matter the reader is referred to Professor Dvijadas Dutt's "Behold the Man" and Chandi Charan Banerji's "Open Letters to Pandit Shastri." The propagandists would ascribe to others ideas and opinions which were really Keshab's, impute motives to his works, suppress and omit important portions from his writings to suggest a wrong interpretation, and so on.

When Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri returned from Madras, he secured the New Dispensation publications and went through them. He temporarily changed his mind and the result was his admirable speech at the Scottish Churches College in 1910. In his Maghotsav address that followed, however, he modified the opinions expressed in this speech considerably adding his usual venom against Keshab which reminded us of the invectives used in the Madras pamphlet. Still the latter portion of this address was not bad. Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri's "History of the Brahmo Samaj" instead of damaging the reputation of Keshab has rather damaged the cause of the entire Brahmo Samaj including the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. We hear he repented for his folly in his latter days.

Pandit Shastri's daughter Sm. Hemlata Sarkar, in her book "The Life of Shivnath", has said that her father felt the pangs of his conscience, up to his very last moments, for his life's mistakes and failures. The extracts from the Pandit's diary quoted by his daughter in her book also corroborate it. We have every reason to believe that if the entire diary, without withholding

any portion of it, were placed before the public (as has, indeed, been promised by Sm. Hemlata in her book), it would clear up many things and throw light on many important points. Unfortunately the promise has not been redeemed up to now, in spite of the Pandit's daughter's declaration that the public have every right to know its contents.

We should next mention the omission of Pandit Preo Nath Shastri's Appendices to Maharshi Debendranath's Autobiography, from the new edition edited by Babu Satis Chandra Chakravarty of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and published by the Viswa Varati. Pandit Preo Nath's Appendices contained Maharshi's admirable letters recording his appreciation of the response that he had received from Keshab all through his life. These letters evidently were not palatable to those whose life's mission was to belittle Keshab. The eighth of the new Appendices in Chakravarty's edition refers to Maharshi spending his time during his youth drinking wine and attending nautches of dancing girls, and this has been added in refutation of the protests of relations of the Maharshi against such statements! We are sure Dr. Rabindra Nath is no party to these misinterpretations or misstatements, but we would fail in our duty to him as well as to his illustrious father if we did not point out what the world would be led to think of the Maharshi. In this connection it may be also noted that certain unwarranted statements made by Sj. Bhavasindhu Datt of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in his Bengali 'Life of Maharshi Debendra Nath' can be rightly challenged.

Vivekananda gave wrong information to Prof. Max Muller, when the latter wrote his book on the Life of

Ramkrishna. The publisher of the Indian Edition of the 'Life of Ramkrishna' by Romain Rolland cites Max Muller and Vivekananda as the most unimpeachable authorities, by whom he wants to prove his case. He forgets, however, that Max Muller's evidence would be hearsay and Vivekananda was one of the propagandists and was an interested party. B. Mazoomdar contradicted the statements in Max Muller's book.

Vivekananda's position was that of a deserter who wanted to belittle Keshab, Pratap and the Brahmos generally. No definite purpose of the Brahmos would be served by belittling any person, far less Ramkrishna, whom Keshab and his band took every care and great pains to bring out from obscurity. They merely protested for truth's sake when they found facts were being mercilessly distorted and absurd stories were being fabricated and broadcasted by Vivekananda and his party. In fact it was Vivekananda who first set the ball rolling.

As for Max Muller, he himself admits that what he wrote was based upon the stories of his informants. Vivekananda was one of them. In reply to Mr. B. Mazoomdar's letter of protest to Prof. Max Muller, the latter wrote the letter quoted below.

Thus the evidence of both these witnesses has no value, and it is fit to be rejected. The Publisher may consider them 'more competent' witnesses but the verdict of commonsense is just the contrary, *viz.*, 'most incompetent' as against numbers of eye-witnesses who were in direct contact with Ramkrishna from 1875 up to 1886 when he passed away.

OXFORD,
22nd August, 1900.

DEAR SIR,

Accept my best thanks for your vindication of Keshab Chandra Sen. I think the remonstrances ought to be addressed to P. C. Mazumdar and Vivekananda. But isn't it clear that I followed their authorities? I do not feel called upon to defend my old book. Let people now read your book and form their own opinion. I just had a Paramhansa Yogendra, here on a visit, a most remarkable man.

Yours very faithfully
(Sd.) F. Max Muller.

B. MAZOOMDAR, ESQR.

We wonder if the publication of a new edition of the Sacred Books of India by Vivekananda is another part of this propaganda and tactics to be popular. However, the interpretation of such *Shastras* cannot escape (and has not escaped) the influence of the ideas of the Brahmo Samaj and of Keshab's in particular. It is to be noted distinctly that though Vivekananda was an "inspired Bohemian" according to the description of Dr. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal, he was not a Sanskrit scholar (*vide* 'Prabuddha Bharat' and 'Life of Vivekananda by his Eastern and Western Disciples'.).

PROPAGANDA OUTSIDE INDIA

Raja Rammohan Roy, the father of Modern India, and a super-man, carried on all-round activities

for the amelioration of the people of India. The abominable and inhuman custom of *suttee* was abolished through his exertions. He served the country and the people in thousand and one way, single-handed. He, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, was the pioneer of all sorts of reforms—religious, social and educational. He was a great philanthropist. To serve people and to remove their wants and miseries were the principal aims of his life. He was a great scholar and it is mainly due to him that we now possess easy access to our ancient *Shastras* and reap the benefit of English education.

Next comes Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore. From the Sanskrit text composed by him "*Tasmin pritistasya priya karyya sadhanancha tadupasana mayba*" it would appear that philanthropy was an item of the creed of the Brahmo Samaj.

During Keshab's time we find that one of the aspects of the New Dispensation was the service of man in varied fields of philanthropic usefulness.

The members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj also engaged themselves in philanthropic works of different kinds. Indeed there was a time when the Brahmo Samaj took the lead in all philanthropic efforts in the country.

Narendra Nath Dutt (Vivekananda) was a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj even in 1882. He also used to go to Brahmananda Keshab Chandra very often and also used to visit the Adi Brahmo Samaj occasionally. He took a part, as *ritwik,* in the "Nava Brindaban" (drama) performances of Keshab's church. He practically had his early training in all the branches of the Brahmo Samaj, and he had the opportunity of

witnessing activities in those Samajes of philanthropic work. He subsequently left the Brahmo Samaj and reverted to idolatry becoming a disciple of Ramkrishna. A few years after the latter's death he went outside India and gathered experience of the philanthropic institutions abroad. He found the call of Providence to work on this line, which was one of the branches of work of the Brahmo Samaj. The impetus he gave to it and the organisation started by him in respect of this work were splendid. The country has immensely been benefited by his work and his name will, therefore, be gratefully remembered.

But we are pained to find his connection with a propaganda in America as well as in India to broadcast misrepresentations regarding Keshab Chandra Sen, Pratap Chandra Mazumdar and the Brahmos in general. He also gave incorrect information to Prof. Max Muller and the latter was duped thereby.

Vivekananda was a great philanthropist, no doubt, but he was far from being a religious teacher, strictly speaking. To the Chicago Parliament of Religions he managed to go at the instance and with the help of a few Madrasi youngmen—but it cannot be said that the orthodox Hindu community who were against sea-voyage, sent him, a Sudra, as their representative. A neo-Hindu like him could represent only neo-Hindus.

In America he found Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, the representative of the Navavidhan Church. Somehow there was some misunderstanding between them and Narendra's antagonism towards Pratap knew no bounds. Some idea of the same can be gathered from Narendra's (Vivekananda's) own Epistles. One of these epistles

(English) was written in 1894 from 541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago. This letter has been reproduced at page 36 of the fifth series (Himalayan Series) of Epistles of Swami Vivekananda. * If you read between the lines of this letter there will be no difficulty to find that the aspersions therein were against Pratap Chandra Mazumdar who had been in America, for the first time, from 28th August 1883 to 22nd November 1883. In the Epistles in question we find these "......came here ten years ago and got much reputation and honour", "......now I am in flying colours." "Shall we, children of Ramkrishna ....be afraid of wormbites?"......"The wicked criticise the conduct of the magnanimous,.........remember all this and forgive this fool", ".........look upon him with pity." At page 63 of the said Epistle he says that the Brahmos were opposing him unceasingly. In the *Patrabali* (Bengali Epistles, Pt. V) "M Babu" is accused of siding with the missionaries (Christian).

This "M Babu" is evidently Mr. Mazumdar or Pratap Chandra. At page 54 of this *Patrabali* also he says that the Brahmo Samaj people were against him.

When in England Vivekananda met Prof. Max Muller and gave him some wrong information which we have already mentioned. The evidence of an antagonist and interested person could not be relied upon nor could be accepted as evidence; the information given was evidently not correct.

On going through these Epistles one is at once convinced that whatever temporary success he achieved in

* The Epistles were translated into Bengali *(Patrabali)*. First Edition B.S. Pous 1332 (1926 A.D.), this First Edition has been referred to in this book.

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America was due solely to propaganda. The letters dated 9th April, 1894, New York, 11th July, 1894, U. S. America addressed to Alasinga, dated 29th June, 1894, from the same place are interesting study exhibiting temper, egotism, conceit, aspersions against different bodies. No man who aspires to be a religious teacher can ever write such letters. The texts of these have been fully given in the Bengali *Patrabali* (Epistles), Pt. V, pp. 31, 33, 39, 48, 52 and 61. In the published English Epistles only short extracts from the same have been given.

His English Epistles, Fifth Series, also contain letters showing extreme arrogance, temper, egotism, aspersions, abuses, boastings unworthy of a religious teacher and especially of one who it is said was God Incarnate. We leave it to the readers to peruse them and to form their own judgment. In these letters he has run down the Brahmos, the Christian Missionaries, the orthodox Hindus, the present Hinduism, the Brahmins and whom not (pp. 63, 65, 66, 73 of the Fifth Series of his English Epistles, Himalayan Series). Still it is said that he was sent to America as a representative of the Hindus.

In the Bengali *Patrabali*, Part V, we find instructions to his associates to make his propaganda successful. He also runs down the Brahmos and the Bengalis (pp. 37 and 60); he says that he was sent to America by some Madrasi youths (pp. 37, 54), that he made a mistake by attending the Parliament of Religions at their request (pp. 54 and 57). He runs down the Hindus (p. 57). At page 43 he himself narrates in what sort of "beastly life" and life of enjoyment he passed full one year in

America. There he frequented first-class luxurious hotels and partook of prohibited dishes and still he claimed to be a representative of Hinduism!

His picturesque yellow dress and his turban attracted the notice of some fashionable people in America. The main cause of his popularity was idle curiosity, of which the get-rich-quick Americans have such an abundant supply. Any great novelty attracts attention there. From J. H. Barrows and other respectable persons of America (like Dr. Charles W. Eliot of Harvard), we learn that the Swami's popularity and work in America have been tremendously exaggerated in India.

The 'Sunday Times' speaks of the Swami as "savouring of anything but the popular idea of asceticism."

His Chicago address and writings were thus criticised by the "Indian Nation," one of the ablest Hindu journals in Calcutta, edited by Mr. N. N. Ghosh, Bar-at-Law, the well-known educationist:

"In truth there is no more difficult subject to discuss than Hinduism and the difficulty borders on impossibility when an attempt is made to compress the exposition into a discourse of a few pages, capable of being read out in about half an hour. We cannot help thinking that it exhibits other evils than those of mere compression. It is not merely inadequate but it is inaccurate, inconsistent and inconclusive.

"It is amusing to observe how the writer (Vivekananda) appropriates the doctrines and motives of Christianity and flings them in triumph at the Christians. The doctrine of love may be Hindu, but it is also and mainly Christian.

"It is very strange indeed that a writer should seize

some of the commonplaces of all religions, and try to make them out to be the differentia of Hinduism. It is little short of ridiculous for instance to argue that it is the Hindu alone who refuses to regard man as a mass of matter."

The Hindu does not want to live upon words and theories. Here also are the same preposterous claims of monopoly.

The Swami said in his Chicago address:

"From the high spiritual flights of Vedantic philosophy of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, from the agnosticism of the Buddhist and the atheism of the Jains to the low ideas of idolatry and the multifarious mythologies, each and all have a place in the Hindu religion." (Page 7.)

The 'Indian Nation' criticised it thus: "Each and all of what? of beliefs or religions we take it. If, however, Hinduism is able to embrace atheism and the low ideas of idolatry and every variety of mythology, it is universal to be sure, but can it claim any organic unity, can it even claim to be a spiritual religion? A mechanical juxtaposition is not unification. Theism and Atheism, Monotheism and Polytheism, Spiritualism and Materialism, are no more reconciled or united by arbitrarily giving to them a common name like Hinduism or binding their written expositions in one volume, than A is identified with Not-A by writing the two symbols together."—(March 20, 1894.) *

Again, in the issue of the 9th April, 1894, of the same paper, it is said:

* Mr. N. N. Ghosh's appreciations of Keshab and his religion will be found in Chapter VI of this book.

"He (the Swami Vivekananda) is beating his head against the rocks when he tries to prove that a religion which lays claims to organic unity and to spirituality may embrace theism and atheism, Vedantism and low ideas of idolatry. Religion, of course, may be so defined as to be applicable to theism, agnosticism, etc. Carlyle gave such a definition. But no one religion can claim at once to affirm and to deny God, to ignore Him and worship Him, to believe in Him as a subtle essence inconceivably fine, and to have 'low ideas of idolatry'. It is useless speaking of the conflicting doctrines as different paths leading to a 'common goal'. We should very much like to know what this common centre is, for we must confess we can conceive of none which can be reached by theism and atheism alike. We are past that stage when a mere phrase would charm us into slavery, and until more light dawns upon us we must hold 'common centre' and 'convergence from diverging radii' to be mere phrases."

Vivekananda said at Chicago:

"The Vedas teach us that Creation is without beginning or end."

Upon this the 'Indian Nation' remarks: "The Vedas cannot be guilty of any such solecism as that. Creation is a thing created and necessarily implies a beginning."

Hymn 129, Book X, of the Veda asserts that Creation had a beginning.

Vivekananda asserted:

"Science has proved to us that the sum total of cosmic energy is the same throughout all time. Then if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy? Some say it was in a potential

form in God. But then God is sometimes potential and sometimes kinetic, which will make Him mutable, and everything mutable is a compound, and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction. And thus God would die. Therefore there never was a time when there was no creation."—(Page 8.)

The 'Indian Nation's' reply was:

"After a little metaphysical dogmatising the writer concludes: 'Therefore there never was a time when there was no creation.' There is certain fitness in this reconciliation, for one contradiction—a creation without a creator and an act of creating—is made to reconcile another, that of theism and atheism. The writer is apparently unaware that he does not very much exalt the conception of God when he thinks that He must be either potential or kinetic energy,—expressions applicable to mechanical energy alone, and not to any spiritual power, like will, for instance."

The Swami heard something about Darwin's theory of Evolution. In his *Yoga Philosophy* he thus impiously applies it to the Deity:

"Starting from some fungus, some very minute microscopic bubble, and all the time drawing from that infinite store-house of energy, the form is changed slowly and slowly, until, in coure of time, it becomes a plant, then an animal, then man, ultimately God." —(Page 43.)

Then again at Chicago Vivekananda said:

"Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth, sinners! It is a sin to call a man so. It is a standing libel on human nature."

This is repeated in a New York lecture quoted in 'The Brahmavadin,' August 29, 1896:

"The worst lie that you ever told yourself was that you were a sinner, or a wicked man."

Strange this same speaker (Vivekananda) in his Epistles, however, characterises some man as without brains, calls some others fools, and pours forth all sorts of abuses on many other human beings.

Then comes his blasphemous utterance in the New York lecture quoted in 'The Brahmavadin', August 29, 1896:

"It is the greatest of all lies that we are men, we are the God of the universe. We have been always worshipping our own selves."

At page 73 of his Epistles, Series V, he says:

"You are God, I am God, and man is God."

These assertions seem more appropriate in a lunatic asylum.

In connection with his Calcutta Address, 'The Vedanta in All Its Phases', a Brahmin auditor describes the Sudra Vivekananda as 'Self-styled Europeanised Swami with his head stuffed with the hash of self-taught *Shruti and Shastra'*, and then he exclaims, 'O *tempora*, O *mores'* at the sickening spectacle of Brahmins sitting at the 'leather-shod feet of a Kayestha (Sudra) Swami'. He characterises the lecture as 'marred by many faults, injudicious remarks, misrepresentations and misinterpretations'.

The Swami picked up a smattering of modern science, and some of this new wine he seeks to pour into the old bottles of Hinduism.

After his return to Calcutta, the Swami was thus referred to by the 'Indian Nation':

"But Vivekananda has here a more serious duty to perform. He has not only to teach but also to *learn*. For where is Hinduism better learnt than in the land of Hindus? It is here then that he must add to his learning, enlarge his thoughts, perfect his wisdom. It is here that he has to face the stiffest problem of life." (February 22, 1897.)

"For genuine undefiled Vedanta, people must resort to the Vedanta-Sutra of Badarayana and the Vedanta-Sara of Sadananda, and not to the concoction compounded by the Swami."

The 'Sunday Times' speaks of the Swami as "savouring of anything but the popular idea of asceticism" (Swami Vivekananda in England, 1896, page 23). The Swami's *sannyasiship* was evidently a nationalistic pose. It is noteworthy that after his return to India the Swami sought to revisit the spot consecrated by his Master, Ramkrishna, but the high priest of Dakshineshwar repelled him.

This was the man who said that he was sent by the Hindus of the great Peninsula of India to represent them at Chicago where he ran down these Hindus and their Hinduism in the most bitter way.

He was not properly qualified to be a representative of the Hindus. Himself a Sudra by caste, he was debarred according to Hindu orthodoxy from dealing with the Vedas. It also does not appear that he ever made a serious study of the Vedanta.

He is now claimed to be "eighteen times a Keshab" *

* Such comparison is odious. Swami Vivekananda like many another Hindu revivalist of modern times came under the influence of Keshab and owed him deep debt of gratitude. In

and God Himself, and that Ramkrishna did not find a second man who could understand him so thoroughly. So his doctrines, may be presumed to have come to him from his Master. One of the doctrines appears to be that both atheism and theism, can lead one to the same centre or spiritual consummation. We, however, know that Ramkrishna was a man of God, and such a curious doctrine could not have its origin in him. Such a doctrine, commonsense would reject. The followers of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda repeat unceasingly that Keshab had not the capacity and intelligence to understand the doctrines of Ramkrishna *in toto*. If by that they mean the doctrine like the one stated above, then what they say is quite true. A rational being cannot understand, nor can be reconciled to such a doctrine.

We get another story from the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda publications. It is said that Vivekananda was not a common religious teacher, that his *sadhans* were of superb order, and it is further alleged that the great

1881 Narendra Nath (latterly Swami Vevekananda) was in the 2nd year Class of the General Assembly's Institution (now called the Scottish Churches College) and the author of this volume was in the 1st year Class of the Presidency College. Both of them were then members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and frequently availed themselves of the opportunity of visiting the Lily Cottage and sitting at the feet of Keshab. They were the recepients of the blessings of the great Brahmo leader and greatly impressed by his magnetic personality. It may be mentioned in this connection that it was in 1881, that Keshab preached, in the Indian Mirror, for the first time the gospel that all the established religions are true. Twelve years later Swami Vivekananda preached the same truth in America, along with the Sankarite Vedanta.

saint Ramkrishna, who was indisputably a man of genuine faith and who is universally respected and honoured by men of all communities, declared Narendra to be "God Himself" *(Sakshat Narayan)* *(vide* Saradananda's 'Life of Ramkrishna', p. 126). We are, however, inclined to think that Ramkrishna never said so. He was incapable of doing so.

If Narendra was such a *Sadhak,* then we may naturally presume that he surely must have brought under control all the passions which ordinary human beings are subject to. A spiritual leader's utterances should always be sweet, sober, heart-touching, soothing, —leading men towards heaven. Vivekananda is proclaimed by his disciples to be a religious teacher of the highest order. His Epistles have been published, we are told, to help men practise *sadhan* and as such, are expected to help ordinary people subdue and get rid of the passions of the flesh and mind such as pride, anger, conceit, haughtiness, greed for money, mean tactics, anxiety for want of money, abusing persons who after promise fail or delay to make payments, etc. But lo! when we go through his Epistles we find aspersions, angry words, and abuses hurled against those whose ideas differed from his, those who could not do what he wanted, or who did not recognise him as a spiritual guide. In these Epistles he has run down the Brahmo Samaj (to which he formerly belonged) and charged its preachers with egotism, haughtiness and pride. Such letters could not have been penned even by an ordinary sober man, far less by a spiritual teacher. It is impossible for a spiritual teacher to indulge in the unspiritual utterances and other exhibition of conceit,

egotism, arrogance, etc., which these Epistles are full of. One who writes such letters forfeits his claim to be a spiritual teacher.

Vivekananda who was a *Sudra* by caste could certainly not have been recognised by the orthodox Hindu as a teacher of the Hindu Faith. Only Brahmans have that right. As he could not have been accepted in India as a teacher of Hindu religion, more so as he previously belonged to the Brahmo Samaj, so he chose America, a country of constant excitement and changeful fads, for his field of work. There he passed himself off as a Kshatriya (one of the twice-born castes) and posed as a representative of the Hindus.

Then, we may ask, did Narendra live strictly as a Hindu, did he take only food sanctioned by Hindus and eschew prohibited food like beef, etc., when he was representing the Hindus in America? Dr. Barrows tells us that he used to take beef there. How could he then have been a *representative of the Hindus* in the Parliament of Religions? If the Americans took him to be so, they were duped. In America Vivekananda represented things in such a way that the people there got a wrong impression about the Hindu religion and about the sincere and genuine workers of other faiths. Some Americans and Europeans relying on the information given by Vivekananda, full of misstatements and misrepresentations as they were and coming from such unreliable and interested sources, have published books containing good deal of inaccurate ideas and false stories regarding the Hindu and other religions of India. They should have approached the fountain heads of genuine and unadulterated materials before dealing with such serious matters.

Brahmos have lost their former enthusiasm and have become weak—their best men have left this world—there is almost none now who can give a prompt and effective reply to mischievous propaganda. Taking advantage of the situation these champions of aggressive Hinduism have been emboldened to manufacture all sorts of stories and pass them off to unwary readers.

The Brahmos of the New Dispensation Church yield to none in genuine respect for the saintly soul of Ramkrishna. It was they who, finding precious qualities in him, brought him out from obscurity when he was almost unknown. They were never chary in their praises of him—nay, some of them have rather overdone it out of abundance of feelings. Their training stands in the way of minimising any act of a benefactor or of distorting anything. Their faith has taught them not to dishonour truth. In fact, a real and genuine religious body, of whatsoever faith, is incapable of being a party to such mean activities. None belonging to such would quote a statement of some body and distort it by purposive interpolations and alterations. This would be unworthy of a genuine follower of any faith whatsoever.

In conclusion we may state that we of the Brahmo Samaj have no quarrel with any religious denomination, far less with the genuine followers of the true doctrines (even if we do not accept some of them) of Paramhansa Ramkrishna whose memory we cherish and revere. Unfortunately, however, some Sannyasis of the Ramkrishna order seem to have, consciously or unconsciously, adopted questionable methods of propaganda which are sometimes indulged in in the West but are unknown to Hindu India. We believe that a careful study of

Vedantic literature together with the rich literature of the *Bhaktimarga* of our country will show them that the path of devotion to a loving and living God is as much necessary as the way of philosophic speculation. The Ramkrishna-Vivekananda order has justly earned a reputation in the country for their ardour for social service. But the more difficult problem of the establishment of peace and good-will amongst the contending religious factions of India and that of social reconstruction are crying for solution. We invite them to revise their methods of propaganda, to try to tackle the Hindu-Moslem problem and to eliminate the thousand and one social evils * from which the country is suffering. A mediæval monkish order is good but is not good enough for the needs and requirements of modern India. Let them realise this and try to cultivate charity and love for followers of other religions and denominations who, for aught one knows, may be serving the motherland in ways undreamt of in the monastery of Belur † or on the heights of Almora.

Keshab was a super-man,—a power. He was therefore

* The ardour for social service shown by the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda order has produced great impression on the country But it is tackling with the symptoms rather than the deep-seated social malady. ' Sir Brojendra Nath Seal, who happened to be a classmate. of Swami Vivekananda and had great regard for him refering to the humanitarian work of the order, once remarked that as the upraised hood of the snake drops down before the proverbial medicinal herb, the reforming zeal of the Vedantic Swamijis, seem to melt away before the heroic task of the social and political reconstruction of the country. In this they take the path of expediency.

† Belur and Almora *Maths* were built with America's money.

made the object of cheap jibes, and attempts were made to belittle him. Some of his teachings were ascribed to others. There was a regular, well-organised, propaganda to run him down by all possible means. Some would take his ideas and pass them off as theirs. Some would run to America and Europe and attempt to influence men like Prof. Max Muller and others by supplying them incorrect information in order to belittle Keshab in their eyes and damage his reputation. Recently some of them approached Romain Rolland with a view to create a bias against Keshab and lionise Vivekananda and Ramkrishna. They, however, were not successful to the extent they expected. Permission was then taken to publish an Indian edition of Romain Rolland's 'Life of Ramkrishna' omitting certain footnotes and adding a chapter (Note No. 2) criticising Romain Rolland and attempting to establish the story of the followers of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda by childish arguments. Romain Rolland could not be deceived fully. Still his book contains some grave inaccuracies for which however, his informants are responsible. *

The unfortunate part of it is the activities of our brethren of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. The 'Brahmo Public Opinion', the 'Samadarshi', some Bengali poems of both before and after 1878 containing most abusive and ungentlemanly attacks on Keshab, Pandit Shastri's pamphlet 'New Dispensation and the Sadharan Brahmo

* In a letter written to the author, on the 3rd January 1932, Romain Rolland says 'I regret in not having knowledge of these things before writing my work, for otherwise I could have avoided certain errors, which I shall try my best to rectify later on.' (See the letter printed elsewhere in this volume).

Samaj', Shastri's two volumes styled 'The History of the Brahmo Samaj' and his 'Auto-biography' all made attempts to belittle and lower Keshab in the estimation of the public. We wonder how a prominent missionary of the Brahmo Samaj could take a leading part in this ungenerous propaganda against Keshab. Prof. D. D. Dutt who was a prominent member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj has very ably dealt with this subject in his book "Behold the Man."

But prejudice once created dies hard. Even the late Mr. J. M. Sen-Gupta who should have known better, in his Calcutta Congress Address of 1928, while recounting all the recent reforms in modern India (for most of which Keshab Chandra Sen was responsible), omitted Keshab's name in connection thereof. The young audience were kept in the dark as to who the real author of all these reforms was. Keshab was the pioneer in the matter of the social as well as religious reforms leading to abolition of caste-system, early marriage, polygamy, purdah system, etc. He also gave an impetus to female education and female emancipation, widow marriage and inter-marriage. For his reforming zeal he had to separate from Maharshi Debendranath and was also persecuted by the Hindu community. * Vidyasagar

* In the wake of Hindu Renaissance, our people are slow to recognise the outstanding services rendered to the country by men like Raja Rammohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The Raja envisaged a comprehensive programme of social reform. His untimely death in a foreign country cut short a promising career. When Vidyasagar and Keshab took the field, the name of Rammohan was all but forgotten. Pundit Iswar Chandra addressed himself to the task of educational reform and the amelioration of the condition of the

(Iswar Chandra) was also a great advocate of widow marriage. Vidyasagar was once the Secretary of the Adi Brahmo Samaj and it is said that he severed all connection with it on account of the conservatism of Maharshi in social matters.

The Bengali couplet,

> Kotha Vidyasagar, Keshab ki kare,
> Hoye agrasar a dukha nasore. *

[Where is Vidyasagar, O Keshab, what are you doing?—Come forward and relieve us from these miseries.]

depicts an imaginary appeal to Vidyasagar and Keshab by the poor widows of those days.

Similarly Babu Kshitimohan Sen of Shantiniketan (Vishva-varati) is guilty of such omission in his article 'Bangalar Pranbastu' in the 'Prabasi' of Chaitra, 1337. He mentioned certain reforms in respect of which Keshab was the principal worker, but while he mentioned

Hindu widows. It was given to Keshab to realise that spiritual reform is foundational. He staked his all to preach and practise the great truths of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man. A maddening love for God and man took possession of him and made him lead a vigorous crusade against caste So the reforming activity in his hands took a revolutionary turn reminding us of the days of Goutama Buddha. It is for this reason the opposition to Keshub is deep-seated in some quarters. Authoritative biographies of the great reformers written by the Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar, Upadhyaya Gourgovinda Roy, Dr. P. K. Sen, may be referred to in this connection. A small book written by Prof. K. S. Ghosh entitled "K. C. Sen and the New Reformation" gives an informing account of Keshub's reform activities within a short compass.

* Sangit Muktabali p. 79.

names of several workers in that connection, he left out Keshab's name. *

It seems to us that it has become a sort of widespread disease to ignore Keshab's achievements and to belittle him as much as possible. Omission of Keshab's name in such matters is, however like the play of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Such deliberate and calculated misrepresentations, for the sake of propaganda, cannot last long. When the present materialistic age will gradually yield to a more spiritual one, Keshab Chandra Sen will shine in the world as a prince amongst prophets with his unique celestial diadem on his head. Even Pandit Shastri admitted it in his speeches of 1910.

We close this chapter with our earnest request to our Indian young friends to go carefully through the English and Bengali works of Keshab Chandra Sen from 1860 to 1883 and his previous tracts also, and then they will find that all the reform movements in modern India, be they social, national, moral, religious or educational—female education, female emancipation, temperance, inter-marriage, and abolition of child-marriage (Act III of 1872),—all philanthropic and even political movements (*vide* Keshab's speeches in England and India) either originated in him or he was the pioneer or principal worker of his time in respect thereof.

Serious mistakes are often made for want of proper knowledge and a tendency of forming an opinion without studying the subject thoroughly and properly. Even some members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj have made ridiculous mistakes of facts. One of them did not

* During the Keshab Birth Centenary Babu Khiti Mohan Sen for the first time referred appreciatingly to Keshab in public.

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hesitate to declare publicly that the present *liturgy* of the Brahmo Samaj was given by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj (which was founded in 1878), although the fact is that it was given by Keshab when he and his party separated from the Calcutta (Adi) Brahmo Samaj in 1866. Pandit Sitanath Tattvabhushan however is a veteran member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and is at present its oldest member. He formerly belonged to Keshab's party and as such is aware of what happened since 1866. He is incapable of making a foolish statement like the one mentioned above. He has, therefore, in his "Philosophy of Brahmoism" faithfully recorded the true fact admitting Keshab's authorship.

On another occasion when some youngmen assembled in the Prayer Hall of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, one of them in all seriousness declared that the wellknown lecture "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia" delivered by Keshab in 1866, was not delivered by Keshab but by Raja Rammohan Roy who, however, died so far back as 1833!

Such glaring and ridiculous mistakes when made by members of the Brahmo Samaj are indeed regrettable. They do not care to study the history of the Brahmo Samaj and be acquainted with correct facts, but they boldly make foolish and incorrect statements. One such statement of Dr. H. Sarkar has been mentioned in another part of this book.

N. B.—The Readers desiring to get further information about the transactions of the new order of sanyasis would do well to read ' PATANONMUKH BELUR MATH" in Bengali written by Mr. G. S. Roy and published by Mr. N. Ghose 38/C, Ramesh Mittra Road, Bhowanipore, Calcutta.

CHAPTER III

INDIAN PUBLISHER'S NOTE 2

IN ROMAIN ROLLAND'S 'LIFE OF RAMKRISHNA'

Swami Vireswarananda, the Indian Publisher of the 'Life of Ramkrishna' by Romain Rolland, has thought fit to add a Note to the Appendix in which he has tried to express his disagreement with M. Rolland's estimate of the relationship that existed between Ramkrishna and Keshab Chandra Sen. He has done this, it is stated, with the approval of M. Rolland. In a footnote the Publisher has drawn the attention of his readers to this particular Note which is not found in the English edition published under a very catching title "Prophet of New India." It may also be mentioned here that the English edition has additional footnotes and bibliographical material for the benefit of the Western readers. It is evident that Note 2 in the Appendix of the Indian edition* is meant for the Indian, or as M. Rolland will put it, Eastern readers.

The reasons for the inclusion of the Note are twofold. They cut both ways, inasmuch as they are meant to refute the charges preferred by M. Rolland against the followers of Ramkrishna and also try to prove that Keshab was a disciple of the Saint of Dakshineshwar. According to Rolland, they come to this conclusion by

* Published in 1931 i.e. about a year after the death of Bhai Promotho Lal Sen who could have dealt with this Note most efficiently.

keeping away certain materials which wili throw light on the relationship that existed between these two men. The Indian Publisher in his defence seeks to take his stand on the statements of such of Keshab's close associates and friends as his biographers (in English and Bengali)—Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, Chiranjiv Sharma (pen-name of Troilokya Nath Sanyal), and Girish Chandra Sen. They are all Apostles and Missionaries of the New Dispensation Church and are well known for their rigid adherence to truth.

In all fairness to the Indian Publisher, we have to admit that he has taken a good stand though not a very safe one. M. Rolland has expressed his point of view in remarkably clear language. There is not the slightest doubt as to what he means. The Indian Publisher does not answer the charge at the outset. Instead he reiterates his faith in the statements made by three of Keshab's aforesaid friends and associates.

Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, the author of 'Life and Teachings of Keshab Chandra Sen', was no doubt Keshab's friend from his childhood. He was, however, out of India during Keshab's last days. In his book he was not very careful about dates, and several mistakes occurred in the two editions of his book published during his lifetime. Besides Rev. Mazumdar was not very familiar with Keshab's life of struggle during his latter days. Keshab's autobiographical sermons included in his Jeevan Veda were suggested by certain questions asked by Mazumdar, which showed that he had not been posted up-to-date as regards Keshab's WAY of life. From the factual point of view the best course for a student of Keshab's life will be to keep close to the

biography of Keshab by Upadhyaya Gour Gobinda Roy who was the only writer, whose accurate statements we can be very well sure of. His exhaustive work in three volumes in Bengali (consisting of 2302 pages), critical, eminently objective but lacking in literary grace, may be a sealed book to many but we are at a loss to understand why the Indian Publisher has not included this evidence along with that of others. We may point out here that in the course of an article published in the 'Vedanta Keshari' in answer to Jamini Kanta Koar's article on 'Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Keshab' (published in the 'Navavidhan', 30th December 1926), the writer in defence of his thesis cited statements made by the aforesaid three friends of Keshab. The reasons for his leaving out Gour Gobinda Roy were never stated. M. Rolland mentions this author in particular in a footnote, but there is no reference to his works in support of any statement in the book.

It is necessary to emphasise that the sources on which the Indian Publisher depends are secondary ones,—that is to say, they are the judgment or opinion of others, not statements of Keshab himself. This has been pointed out to the readers of *Navavidhan* by Jamini Kanta Koar in his article 'Keshab and Ramkrishna and the Motherhood of God'. Promotho Lall Sen also writes: "All these biographies of Keshab take us a great way off from him. Good in themselves, they do not help but hinder us from direct communion with him. It is easier to understand his own words, so full of simple truth, of true faith, of faithful love; it is easier to understand these than the expositions of his friends" ("K. C. Sen—A Study," pp. 19-20). Upadhyaya Gour

Gobinda Roy in his monumental biography of Keshab lets his hero's own words speak for themselves more than any other biographer. That is why his testimony is to be valued most—almost next to the testimony of the statements of Keshab himself. Many other critics also have omitted consistently this highly authentic source. Historical critics are agreed today, just as Schopenhauer made the statement with regard to the study of the Upanishads in original, that there is nothing like the study of the originals. It is unfortunate that our friends of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement often forget this important canon of historical criticism. It is easy to mislead ordinary readers but it is difficult to convince historical students, whether of the East or of the West, as to the best source-material. Only in places where the original sources are wanting, a student can go to the secondary sources. We regret our friends of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement do not realise the importance of this fact. Had they realised it, they would have gone to Keshab's writings for an interpretation of his spiritual 'pilgrimages' in which, pilgrimage to Ramkrishna was as much an essential fact as his numerous other pilgrimages e.g., to the Pawhari Baba of Gazipur, Dean Stanley of England and others.

M. Rolland sees clearly that Keshab was not a disciple of Ramkrishna. The Indian Publisher admits that, but with a qualification. According to him Keshab was not a disciple technically so called, but he learnt from Ramkrishna and borrowed ideas from him. In fact, the distinctive ideas which enrich Keshab's conception of the New Dispensation were to be ascribed to Ramkrishna's originality. Keshab has taught us to

revere *Bhaktas* and not to criticise them. Far be it for us to criticise Ramkrishna, but in justice to the two biographers of Keshab and one biographer of Ramkrishna in the fold of the New Dispensation, we shall be failing in our duty, if we do not make our contribution towards the clearing up of a tangled situation created by over-active disciples of Ramkrishna and the indifference of Keshab's friends and followers.

From a study of Note 2 as well as other Ramkrishna-Vivekananda literature, we find that attempts are being made to prove that "the three most important elements" found in the thought of the New Dispensation were not conceived by Keshab before he met Ramkrishna. They are: (1) the worship of God as Mother; (2) the recognition of all religions and prophets as true; and (3) the assimilation of Hindu polytheism into Brahmoism (p. 325). The Indian Publisher makes out a point which has to be noted here. He asserts that Keshab might have had the idea of worship of God as Mother, but that is to be differentiated from the acceptance of it as a creed, which according to the Publisher came later on, about the time of the declaration of the New Dispensation. His view is that Keshab might have referred to God as Mother casually, but not formally and systematically. In this connection, the Publisher raises the question—"Why did Keshab renounce this idea when he became a Brahmo?" In answer to this as well as other questions, he offers his theory: the influence of the Paramhansa on Keshab brought these new developments in their train. In support of this view Swami Vireswarananda cites several passages from the writings of Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, and one passage from Keshab's own writings.

With regard to what are described by the Indian Publisher, as "three most important elements" the first element viz., "Motherhood of God" is thus referred to by Pratap Chandra Mazumdar:

"In his devotional colloquies he (Keshab) often addressed the deity in various forms of the word Mother. And *now* (*i.e.*, after meeting Ramkrishna) the sympathy, friendship and example of Paramhansa converted the Motherhood of God into *a subject of special culture with him.*" (The italics are ours).

And the special efforts led him, practical and circumspect as he was, to organise the Arya Nari Samaj and to lift the Woman movement, started earlier, on to the higher plane of spiritual culture. This also served to carry out the purpose of his developments—namely, to give the New Dispensation a national character. Simultaneous culture of Christianity with other religions operated to keep the national character within limits and to give it a universal character. The idea of harmony of religions and the practices based thereon, the synthesis of religions, can be traced to the earliest years of his Brahmo Samaj activities. Their restatement and formulation came as a logical sequence and a practical counterpoise to the emphasis on naturalism in his disciplines and doctrines. P. C. Mazumdar says in page 205 (Life of Keshab) as follows:

"The growth of the Christian spirit in the New Dispensation thus became national, and the growth of national Theism was regulated by the spirit and teachings of Christ."

With regard to the third element—viz., "the assimilation of Hindu polytheism into Brahmoism," (stated later

by the publisher as 'acceptance' of Hindu polytheism), Mazumdar (pages 214 and 215) explains that the mystical mind of Keshab rapidly grasped "the essential conception of Hindu polytheism" related by the Paramhansa and began to give brilliant exposition of the esoteric teachings of the mythologies of India, although "he kept the simple universal basis of Theism intact". Every idol worshipped by the Hindu represented an attribute of God, every god was an incarnation of a divine attribute. The gods were thus accepted not as God but as symbolic of the various attributes of God. "This was really helpful in reconciling Keshab's exalted precepts with the great religious systems of India. Thus gathering the fragments of the divine attributes and conceptions into a focus of *undivided* Deity is what Keshab calls his synthesis of the perception of God; and 'worshipping God in His various aspects and attributes' is his analysis." Mazumdar takes care to point out also that along with the spiritual explanation of Hindu polytheism, Keshab went on giving expositions of the dogma of Divinity of Christ whom he described as the 'Chit-Christ' and with whom he saw all the prophets and seers of the world (all celestial, primary and moral forces) in one family and united with one another and in God. What Mazumdar did not say but might have said with Gour Gobinda Roy is that in Keshab's devotions there was developed in twenty years a form of worship which, in '*Aradhana*' (Adoration) and meditation (*Dhyan*), dealt explicitly with the attributes (*Swarupa*) of God. Steeped as he was in the contemplation and realisation of these attributes, it was the easiest thing for him to enter into the *adhyatmic byakhya* (spiritual

interpretation) of the gods and idols of Hinduism by Ramkrishna. The *Khanda Bhav* (partial nature) of the Hindu deities was, however, emphasised by Keshab and he did not therefore sink into idolatry or polytheism, for he worshipped the *undivided* Deity. Keshab thus became more deeply involved in his great work of vindication and *rehabilitation* of the great religions of the world; and the more he succeeded the deeper became his insight into the fact that all the established religions of the world were *equally* true, in as much as they were Dispensations of God in so far as they were the dealings of the Holy Spirit! *

If we examine what is stated by the Publisher to be the three most important elements in the New Dispensation, what do we find? Mazumdar mentions—"three great purposes of the various developments" in the New Dispensation are: (1) a National Religion, (2) a Universal Religion, (3) an Apostolical Religion. It is a religion of harmony and religion of synthesis. It is a new Revelation of God's saving grace. In it we see the *leela*, the working of the Spirit of God. Consequently the New Dispensation is a *revelation of God* in History over and above the revelation of God in Nature and Individual Soul. It naturally recognises the saints and prophets and the different religions that are evolved in the progressive march of humanity. A brotherhood of prophets and saints and a sisterhood of religions—these

* Pilgrimage to saints had an honoured place in Keshab's spiritual discipline. Communion with the spirit of Mahomet precluded all possibility on the part of Keshab to compromise strict monotheism. He assimilated the vital truths of Pouranic Hinduism but, unlike Paramhansa, kept clear of its limitations.

are essential to the New Dispensation. Our critic, the Indian Publisher, forgets the most important fact that the New Dispensation is a Revelation *par excellence.* It has for its important doctrines the pilgrimages to saints and communion with them. It has also its sacraments. It reconciles Reason and Faith, *yoga* and *bhakti,* asceticism and social duty, in their highest forms, and hopes for the coming of the family of God in our midst. These ideas were present in 1866 and even earlier, in 1860. Following the lead given by Keshab, Upadhyaya Gour Gobinda Roy composed his beautiful couplets (Slokas) quoted at p. 36 of this book a translation of which is repeated here:

"The wide Universe is the temple of God; the Soul without spots is the true sanctuary; Truth is the everlasting scripture; Faith is the root of all religions; Love is the supreme spiritual discipline; the Destruction of Selfishness is the true asceticism: So declare the Brahmos."

In 1860, Keshab indicated the coming of the New Dispensation. A careful perusal of the passages, quoted before, taken from Keshab's 'Essays: Theological and Ethical' will convince any impartial reader of the fact that the beginnings of the New Dispensation long preceded Ramkrishna's visit to Keshab, nay, even Ramkrishna's first glimpse of Keshab on the pulpit of the Adi Brahmo Samaj in 1863 (*vide* passages from '*The Religion of Love*' quoted in Chapter II.)

As an additional support to the statement we have made in contradiction of the Indian Publisher's main theory that the most important elements in Keshab's New Dispensation were the outcome of Ramkrishna's

strong influence on Keshab,—for thus concludes the Publisher in his uncalled-for and altogether unnecessary note:—"......it was his (Keshab's) association with Sri Ramkrishna that made him develop his eclectic outlook until it appeared in the form of the New Dispensation"—we reproduce here again an English translation of one of Keshab's remarkable prayers offered in 1874:

"O Lord! how wonderful is the scripture that has been opened unto us, but wretched as we are we do not care to peruse it. We know not that *our religion is the religion of the whole world*. That is why we think our religion will die leaving no trace behind. Our hearts are buoyed up to think that Thou hast brought the Kingdom of Heaven on earth from the beginning of her history. O Fountain of Love, I perceive *Thy Grace has solved the problem of religions, removed all discord and even unified all truths*. May *all the saints of the past be* relished and cherished by us. Thou art ever kind. Thou hast initiated us into the Order of Love. O God! we feel Thy love. Thou hast come with all Thy Dispensations. Thou art the Lord of Eternity. Not one scripture but hundreds of scriptures lie at Thy feet. Thou hast come with all Thy righteous and saintly children. Thou hast done everything for us. O Lord of Mercy, Thy kingdom extends over the entire universe and yet Thy favours are bountiful. How can we forget Thy gifts of Love? Thou hast revealed so great a scripture to us. We shall *worship Thee in unison with the spirits of the saints of all ages*

> *and all countries*. Thou vouchsafest the descent of all great saints of this earth unto us. Do Thou ordain that they be on our side in *the Dispensation of the Age*."—(Sunday, 22nd March 1874; —Prayer, Bharatavarshiya Brahmo Mandir, Acharyer Prarthana, Part I, p. 152, Cen. Edn.)

The prayer quoted above shows very clearly how the idea of a New Dispensation in which the saints and prophets have their respective places of honour had found acceptance with Keshab before he met Ramkrishna. That the New Dispensation is not a device invented by Keshab after the highly controversial Cooch-Bihar marriage has been proved in a very scholarly treatise—'Behold the Man' by Professor Dwijadas Dutta. As the Indian Publisher has quoted the authority of Mazumdar when he wants to prove that the New Dispensation was ushered into existence by the direct influence of Ramkrishna, we may also refer to the same authority to prove something quite different from what the critic wants to make out. Here are some passages from Mazumdar's 'Life and Teachings of Keshab Chandra Sen,' Second Edition:

1. "Doctrines, festivals, disciplines, nay, the very idea of the *New Dispensation itself, have flowed from the master's* (Keshab's) *devotions, so heart-stirring* they were" (p. 166).

2. "He discovered in each missionary or apostle some great essential quality of a new religious dispensation........." (p. 176). This was in 1867 long before Keshab met Ramkrishna (in 1875).

3. "The *whole idea of the New Dispensation* was *fully conceived*, named and elucidated in Keshab's

anniversary lecture 'Behold the Light of Heaven', nearly three years before the Cooch-Bihar marriage was dreamt of'' (p. 199). This was also before Keshab met Ramkrishna.

4. "The grand idea that the religion of the Brahmo Samaj was a New Dispensation of God to India had forcibly *occurred to him* (Keshab) already *with much inner light*. In successive sermons to his congregation *in 1874, and even earlier*, he had elucidated the principles by which Providence made such revelations to different ages and races'' (p. 193).

5. "The various developments that crowded into the history of the Brahmo Samaj of India since 1879 under the name of the New Dispensation, did not in any sense disturb the continuity of the principles which had for more than a decade characterised the Theistic movement as led by Keshab Chandra Sen. The purposes of his Church remained unaltered, only the methods taken to carry out those purposes, and the impulses that suggested those methods, changed considerably. We have repeatedly tried to show that Keshab's object from the time he joined the Brahmo Samaj was to find and to preach 'a religion of life'. The very first principle of this religion of life was the acceptance of a Living God, and living relations with Him. 'The Lord is in our midst,' says he, 'not as a dead Deity, but as a Living God or Providence.' 'Here you see God's special providence working out the redemption of the land, through the instrumentality of a complete dispensation, with its full complement of apostles, scriptures and inspirations.' His primary purpose, therefore, was that his Church should acquire the highest order of spiritual

relations with the 'Living God of Providence,' and be filled and guided by His breath in every duty, and in every undertaking. With this view he had introduced the Yoga and Bhakti developments in 1875 * ; for this purpose he had insisted so strongly upon the doctrines which will be presently explained" (p. 195).

6. "Thus in the doctrine of Inspiration was laid the foundation-stone of Keshab's future movement of the New Dispensation" (p. 201).

7. "In the third place, as the Brahmo Samaj of India began its career in a harmony of scriptures, by publishing texts from the sacred books of all religions in 1866 under the name of the *Sloka Sangraha,* and in a harmony of prophets through the two well-known lectures by the leader (Keshab) on Jesus Christ, and Great Men, so in the progress of that Church it was his purpose to complete the reconciliation of religions. Eclecticism had been the philosophy and faith of the Brahmo Samaj ever since the giving up of the Hindu Scriptures as infallible, about the year 1850. Keshab inherited that position when he entered the institution ten years later and did all he could to confirm it by his studies, lectures, labours and reforms. But in spite of all these eclectic professions the Brahmo Samaj, under Debendra Nath Tagore, practically retained its purely Hindu character. When Keshab started on his independent career in 1866, he not only determined that the universality of modern Hindu Theism in the Brahmo movement should be a reality, but that it should form the

* Wrongly printed as 1876, in Mazumdar's book. Similarly, the date of first meeting of Keshab and Ramkrishna was also therein wrongly printed as 1876.

ground-work of all spiritual culture in that Church...... To Keshab, the harmony of religions was the great mission of Brahmo Samaj.......With him the harmony of religions meant the harmony of doctrines, of scriptures, of prophets, and of cultures. It meant a common faith for all mankind. His object was to lay the foundation of a Universal Church upon the ground of essential unity among all religions'' (p. 197).

These few selections from Mazumdar's writings are clear enough. We think that anyone without bias, will find in them ample evidence for holding a view different from that held by the writer of Note 2. Long before the declaration of the New Dispensation, Keshab Chandra Sen was nursing these seed-thoughts and practising national modes of devotion which found more definite and very clear embodiment in the multifarious practices and institutions developed further in the New Dispensation. The significant statements of Mazumdar: "THE VERY IDEAS OF NEW DISPENSATION ITSELF HAVE FLOWED FROM THE MASTER'S (KESHAB'S) DEVOTIONS", and "THE WHOLE IDEA OF THE NEW DISPENSATION WAS FULLY CONCEIVED" (before 1875), quoted already, give us a very different conception from the charge of 'borrowing' or 'learning'. If anyone still attempts to ascribe the origination of the New Dispensation to Ramkrishna Paramhansa of blessed memory, we have nothing more to say.

An ingenious attempt has been made in Note 2 to prove that Keshab owed much to Ramkrishna for his conception of the Motherhood of God. Three passages, one from Pratap Chandra Mazumdar and two from Keshab's own have been quoted in the Note in support of the theory that Keshab accepted the idea of

Motherhood of God through Ramkrishna's influence. The first passage is taken from page 204 and the last from page 205 of Mazumdar's "Life and Teachings of K. C. Sen". This topic has been dealt with more fully in another chapter, as it deserves a thorough treatment. But we can point out one thing in this connection which has escaped the notice of the writer of the Note. Mazumdar mentions that the conception of Motherhood of God *developed* and *deepened* through association with the sage of Dakshineshwar. The writer of the Note makes the assertion that Keshab was influenced by Ramkrishna for this conception. In fact he goes further and states that Keshab borrowed it from Ramkrishna. There is an essential difference between the statements of Mazumdar and the Publisher.

We shall examine here one statement made by Mazumdar which has been ignored in the Note. Here is the statement: "We have already said how the association of Paramhansa Ramkrishna developed the conception of the Motherhood of God *which had often enough occurred in Keshab's mind before,* and found utterance in the pressure of his trials and sorrows" (p. 214). If the writer of the Note read the statement which he had quoted along with the above-mentioned sentence, he would have a better apprehension of the whole truth. Students of philosophy know that besides coherence and correspondence there is another way of approach to the nature of truth, that of reference to the context. If we read Mazumdar's statement with reference to the context we shall have better understanding of Keshab's position than what has been presented by our friends of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement. Just as the writer

of the Note has tried to differentiate between the knowledge and the acceptance of an idea, he should have seen the difference between each of those and that of *deepening, developing* or even *broadening*. With reference to Keshab's Motherhood of God, Mazumdar has used these expressions but no attempt has yet been made by our friends to evaluate these with reference to their master's conception of Motherhood of God.

Keshab's was a spiritual pilgrimage from analysis to synthesis. Upadhyaya Gour Gobinda Roy, in his lecture on 'Keshab's Analysis and Synthesis', has shown that by renouncing in early life all the spiritual heritage that he could claim, he denuded himself so absolutely, that he had nothing else but God to depend upon. It was the dependence—this absolute surrender to God—which led him later to the path of synthesis. The Upadhyaya writes: "The synthetic move which had its start in *Bhakti* became rooted later in *Yoga*. From that time on, Keshab's life was mainly synthetic. By alienating himself from all sects, saints and prophets, scriptures,"—in fact, all that goes by the name of religion in the popular sense,—"Keshab took refuge in God alone. If the significance of this is not understood, the deeper truth in Keshab's life will remain hidden." It is no wonder that the writer of the Note failed to see the deeper side of Keshab's character when he made this statement:

"But there is a world of difference between the *knowledge* of an idea and the *acceptance* of it; and Keshab's mere knowledge of the idea of the Motherhood of God does not prove that in Keshab's *acceptance* of that idea Sri Ramkrishna had no influence. Why did

Keshab reject the idea when he became a Brahmo? And why did he afterwards return to it? What was the decisive factor in the reacceptance?" (Life of Ramkrishna, p. 326.)

It is a fact well known to many that when a ship is in danger, in order to save her, the Captain has to throw overboard a good deal of the cargo she might be carrying. But once she is out of danger, she can carry the same amount of load. Theologically, Keshab tried to give up the old ideas and practices, not when he joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857, but even before that date. But psychologically, he was hardly able to free himself entirely from these old influences. Hindu influences worked in him always and we freely admit that the fellowship with Ramkrishna Paramhansa made these influences more living.

At the same time we should note that the secondary or tertiary sources to which the critics refer should not be relied upon entirely. It is undoubtedly true that though Keshab wrote and spoke a good deal through the medium of English yet his *Bengali* Prayers, Sermons and Lectures reveal the deeper springs of his inspiration in a way as no other sources can. Unfortunately those of our friends who write about Keshab leave out most of these original materials and depend on sources which are not of equal value.

Those who depend on Mazumdar's authority should also note that according to him, the most important element in the New Dispensation is not what has been pointed out by the Indian Publisher. It is—the first definite claim put forward, the first doctrine definitely announced, upon which the New Dispensation reared

itself was the doctrine of INSPIRATION"—(Mazumdar's 'Life and Teachings of K. C, Sen,' 2nd Edition, p. 200, 3rd Edition, p. 224.)

REV. GIRISH CHANDRA SEN

Our friends of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement make much of some of the writings of Bhai Girish Chandra Sen of the New Dispensation. Shortly after Ramkrishna's death Girish Chandra published in the columns of *Dharmatattwa,* the fortnightly Bengali journal of the New Dispensation Church in Calcutta, a series of Ramkrishna's sayings in the form of questions and answers. As a preface to these, he wrote a short life of the Paramhansa, in the course of which he tried to indicate the character of the relationship that existed between the saint of Dakshineswar and Keshab, who preceded him by two years and a half. Below is a translation from the original article as published in the 'Dharmatattwa' [Aswin 1, 1808, Shaka: (September 16, 1886), pp. 194—196]:

"The benefit derived by Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Keshab owing to their close association was of a *reciprocal* character. The conception of God's motherliness was *spread* in the Brahmo Samaj through Paramhansa's life. To call God by the sweet name of Mother as a simple child does and to pray to Him in a childlike spirit, this habit our Minister (Keshab) received in a special way from the Paramhansa. Erstwhile the religion of the Brahmo Samaj was one of rationalism and dry disputations, the shadow of the life of Paramhansa rendered it moist and fresh. On the other hand, Ramkrishna coming in contact with Keshab had advanced

more towards the realisation of a Formless God. He further profited by this contact in acquiring liberalism in religion and to a certain extent in learning the rules and disciplines of cultured society."

It is interesting to note that these articles were appended to the first published Sayings of Ramkrishna called *Paramhansher Ukti* (in Bengali) which later came out in the form of a pamphlet. There was no mention of the author though many knew that it emanated from the pen of Rev. Girish Chandra Sen. In the second edition of the book we find a few minor changes which may be read thus:

"The conception of God's motherliness was awakened in the Brahmo Samaj through Paramhansa's life.......Notwithstanding the element of Bhakti introduced into the Brahmo Samaj, it was characterized mainly by Faith and Knowledge *(Viswas* and *Jnan)*. The influence of Paramhansa made it all the more sweet."—(Paramhanser Ukti, p. 57).

Satyendranath Majumdar in his Life of Vivekananda (Vivekananda Charit in Bengali) claims to have quoted the original from 'Dharmatattwa' (p. 61). When translated, the passage curiously enough reads thus:

"The Brahmo Samaj received the conception of God's motherliness from Paramhansa's life. Especially did Acharya Keshab Chandra *learn* to call God our Mother and to offer prayers to Her in a spirit of childlike simplicity and tantrum. Erstwhile the religion of the Brahmo Samaj was rational, cold and full of logical arguments. The ideal of Paramhansa's life rendered it dearer and more devotional by removing its cold character."

Any intelligent person will be amazed to read the transformation which the original passage (either published in the 'Dharmatattwa' or in the pamphlet) has undergone. It would appear that the entire passage has been rewritten in a short form, but with the interpolation of the significant word *Siksha* (learn), to serve a purpose. If the author of 'Vivekananda Charit' had admitted that the quotation was from memory (which could not very well be relied upon in this particular case), we would have understood the author. But the form in which it has appeared in print, without any qualification, shows that it is perhaps manufactured by a clever propagandist from the headquarters of a Religious Expeditionary Force. If this type of twisted half-truths and untruths are passed on unchallenged, for the time being it may serve the cause of propaganda or help a deliberate and systematic conspiracy to lower Keshab in the estimation of the younger generation. But we rely on an expression used by Keshab when he subscribed to a fund for the construction of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Mandir under the *nom de plume* *"Satyameva jayate"* (Truth will triumph). We are sure that, as days pass, this ancient expression will fructify and the beautiful spirit of Keshab will shine brighter on the Indian horizon, in spite of the puny attempts made by pigmies to belittle his contribution to modern Indian life and thought.

In this connection it may be noted that though much has been said of the Gospel of Ramkrishna by 'M', we have made very few references to Suresh Chandra Dutta's "Sri Ramkrishna Paramhanser Upadesh", published in a form similar to that of Rev. Girish Chandra. The

work appears to have been published immediately after Ramkrishna's death, if not earlier, but its claim has been ignored and it has not been given the recognition as some of the latter-day gospel accounts have been. One may be justified in drawing a parallel with the different Gospels of Jesus, the writers of which approached the teachings of their Master from a particular angle and gave special colourings to their accounts to prove their own thesis; as Matthew tried to show that Jesus was the descendant of the kingly house of David, and Luke always made Jesus a friend of the poor, the lowly and the oppressed; so perhaps the Gospel according to Suresh Chandra Dutt did not serve the purpose which the elaborately written latter-day Gospel of 'M' did.

Rev. Troilokyanath Sanyal

Much has been made of the witness, Keshab's biographer Troilokyanath Sanyal *alias* Chiranjiv Sharma who first wrote the life of Keshab in Bengali. Troilokyanath makes it clear that the mutual character of the influence exerted by Ramkrishna and Keshab enriched the lives of these two men and those who came in close contact with them. That Ramkrishna influenced the religious developments in the Brahmo Samaj could not be denied by any serious student of history. Consequently students of Keshab's life like Troilokyanath (Chiranjiv), Pratap Chandra, Girish Chandra and others, out of their sheer love for truth, acknowledged the infuence which Ramkrishna had on Keshab; but at the same time *each one* of these writers mentioned in unmistakably clear language that the religious life of Ramkrishna was also broadened and deepened because of his fellowship with Keshab.

The followers of Ramkrishna, however, acknowledge only one fact and that is, their Master was introduced to the larger educated public through the efforts of Keshab and his friends. * As for the reciprocal influence, they remain altogether silent except mentioning that Keshab was indebted to Ramkrishna for important developments in the New Dispensation. † In fact, they even go further and declare that Keshab in his latter days became a disciple of Ramkrishna, worshipped him, and spread the latter's ideas in a partial way under the new name of Navavidhan: ‡

In the second edition of his book (1897), Troilokyanath, while referring to the meeting of Ramkrishna and Keshab, introduces a few sentences in which he mentions the injustice done to Ramkrishna by his so-called followers, who have by their deliberate misrepresentation of facts in respect of the relationship that existed between them, portrayed or painted a picture of Ramakrishna that is not true to the original—the man himself.

Troilokyanath's reference to this union between two kindred spirits made clear the following points:—

(1) Keshab brought Ramkrishna before the larger educated public from the obscurity of the Kali Temple at Dakshineshwar.

(2) The disciples of Ramkrishna have made a god of him and yet have painted him as a Vedantist. They have circulated many false statements about Ramkrishna and Keshab.

* Dhan Gopal Mukherji's 'The Face of Silence.'

† Saradananda.

‡ 'M' in his 'Gospel of Ramkrishna', Saradananda in his 'Sri Ramkrishna Lila Prasanga'.

(3) Brahmo Samaj profited a good deal through the comradeship of these two kindred spirits. The *Bhakti* element in the Samaj received an impetus.

(4) Keshab, as admitted by himself in his autobiographical sermons—Jeevan Veda, was a great absorber and assimilator of everything good wherever and in whomsoever found. His was never an exact copy of anything. He had the wonderful power of turning old things into new ones by remoulding them. Ramkrishna's childlike simplicity and sweetness of temperament coloured Keshab's *yoga, bhakti,* morals and pure spiritual perceptions.

(5) Ramkrishna was the chief supporter of the *bhakti* developments in the Brahmo Samaj and also of the emphasis on the conception of the Motherhood of God (*Iswarer Matribhava*).

(6) Owing to the presence of a super-abundance of religious feeling Ramkrishna used to see images of Kali and Krishna. But though a great *bhakta* himself Keshab was till his last days a *Brahmajnani*.

(7) The contact with Keshab ennobled and purified the grosser and cruder elements in the religious life of Ramkrishna. Formerly he did not recognise the possibility of freedom and responsibility in leading a spiritual life while in the world. Fellowship with Keshab enlarged his spiritual vision, and in his latter days he recognised that human beings are capable of acquiring these gifts, however difficult they may be.

(8) The liberal outlook which enabled Ramkrishna to look beyond the pale of Hindu circle is an outcome of his companionship with Keshab.

(9) The use of slang and occasionally vulgar

expressions, even before his women audience, became restrained and rectified later through Keshab's personal influence.

(10) Ramkrishna's life was that of a *bhakta* but his faith and principles were full of errors and were unscientific.

(11) Whenever anyone had occasion to refer to the preaching of religion, Ramkrishna used to point to Keshab as the man capable of undertaking the task.

(12) The adoption of a child's simple language in offering prayers to God the Mother became more general in the Brahmo Samaj of Keshab's latter days as the result of the sweet and abiding relationship that existed between these two God-gifted voices of India.

Attempts have been made to prove that Universal Religion was preached first by Vivekananda, who had his inspiration from Ramkrishna. In the course of an imaginary conversation published in the form of a tract called 'Religion of Love' (1860) Keshab wrote thus with reference to the religion of the Brahmo Samaj:

"It is anti-sectarian; catholicity is its distinguishing characteristic; love is its very life. It is not the religion of any particular community, epoch or country; *it is universal religion;* it is 'Human Catholic Religion'. It is this which clearly distinguishes Brahmoism from all systems of faith...... While they seek to divide mankind into distinct hostile parties, Brahmoism goes forth to bring all mankind to a state of *unity and harmony*. While they confine their love within their own respective sects, Brahmoism extends the holy current of love to the whole human race. Sectarianism limits and distorts man's views and sentiments; Brahmoism expands his

soul and enlarges his conceptions.........The latter is the kingdom of peace in which *all mankind are a brotherhood,* and love reigns supreme."—(Essays: Theological and Ethical, p. 25, Fifth Edition).

Lest others should be led to believe that before the advent of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement, there was no movement towards Universal Religion in the country, we quote here another significant passage from the same source written fifteen years before Ramkrishna met Keshab:

"O my friend, be not a sectarian. Sectarianism is opposed to the very vital principle of religion,—to wit, love. Sacrifice all that is exclusive, narrow, and antagonistic—sacrifice all that soweth discord and unbrotherly feelings between man and man, if you seek true religion, for true religion is universal love...... The object of religion is to unite and bring together—not to separate; to consolidate the whole mass of mankind—not to divide it into countless sections; to annihilate, not to raise, partitions; to attract, not to repel; to make a brother, not an enemy. This is the very object of Brahmoism...... Love, union and peace are her watchwords. A Brahmo sees all in relation to God.......The world is his home—human race his family......Come all ye religious sects—let us all fling away sectarian opinions, sectarian antagonism, sectarian bigotry, and meet together on the common ground of Universal Religion."—(Essays: Theological and Ethical pp. 26—28).

ROMAIN ROLLAND'S "LIFE OF RAMKRISHNA"

Romain Rolland is a critic of music and art, author of studies on Beethoven and Michael Angelo, a 'Nobel-laureate' in literature, well known for his masterpiece *(magnum opus)* 'Jean Christopher', which ran into eight parts in French, four in English and three in American editions. During the days of the last Great War, he was hailed as a major prophet by the pacifists in all European and American countries. In fact, he was a *guru* of the Western pacifists, who rallied round his banner when he published his series of appeals which, when they came out in book-form, bore the significant title "Above the Battle". We were not at all surprised when such a man, at the end of the War, tried his hand on writing a study of Mahatma Gandhi which was first published serially in English in the American monthly *The Century Magazine*. It is interesting to note that in the biblography of that book Rolland referred to an article from the pen of our friend and co-worker Satyendra Roy of Lucknow, 'On Gandhi by Roy' which was published in the *World To-morrow*. Some of us knew in those days that Rolland would try his hand next to the writing of a study of Rabindranath Tagore, with whom he had much affinity. About the year 1926, we came to learn that instead of writing a study of Tagore, Rolland was planning a study of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. In the meantime, Romain Rolland published a triology—"Mother and Son", "Anette and Sylvie", and "Summer". He is the author of several dramas and biographical stories. A Roman Catholic by

birth and a Humanist by choice, Rolland is almost worshipped by many free spirits of the West. Though a Humanist, he still has a mystical outlook and all his writings are tinged by a mysticism,—a new humanistic mysticism as it were of the twentieth century. Naturally John Haynes Holmes, who dedicated his book *Patriotism Is Not Enough* to Rolland is a great friend of his. Monsieur Rolland's influence can very well be gauged from the following dedicatory note by Rev. John Haynes Holmes of the Community Church of New York:

> "I dedicate this book a humble offering to you, a great soul, because more than any other living man you embody in your life, as you have taught in your books, the message I would convey to my readers.—What truth I speak has been learned at your feet.
>
> "I dedicate this book to you also because I would confess to what I owe you. In days of grief and terror when I seemed alone, you cheered me with your friendship. In hours of darkness when I stumbled, you were a light upon my path. The world shook but you stood fast and brought to me, as to thousands in all countries, solace and strength. Nothing that I do can repay my debt to you, but it gives me comfort to acknowledge it.
>
> "I love you as a comrade; I reverence you as a leader. May I ask you, as one more service, to accept this sincere if feeble tribute to your name."

Such is the man who was induced by our friends of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement to write a study

of their two Masters and incidentally refer to the Renaissance Movement in India during the last century and the early part of the present one. Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukherjee, who himself has written a study of Ramkrishna entitled "THE FACE OF SILENCE", Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy, whose interest in the revival of Indian music is well known, and one of the Swamis of the Movement interested Rolland in attempting to write a study of their Masters. Dr. Satyananda Roy of the New Dispensation Church when he came to learn of Rolland's plan, sent him a package of books, all of which we find mentioned in his bibliographical footnotes. *

Rolland had to work under great difficulties. He does not know English. His sister, Madeline Rolland, who knows English and can read Bengali, was a great help and constant companion. Without her aid and companionship, he could not have accomplished the long journey—this "pilgrimage of the soul", as he describes it. Undoubtedly Madeline Rolland, as Mon. Rolland has admitted, is to be given credit for completing this monumental work—two volumes, covering about three hundred and fifty pages each (Indian Edition). There is no doubt that we see in the book a good deal more of Rolland than what we see in his studies of Gandhi, Beethoven and Michael Angelo. It appears to us that Rolland reveals himself more in this than in his other

* Even if Rolland read all the books sent by Satyananda, they could not have produced the same effect as a personal representation of Keshab as he was, by his own followers, would have. The followers of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda had this advantage. The other side went more or less by default.

previous studies. On a very careful study of his chapters on the Builders of Unity (Chap. VI), and Ramkrishna and the Great Shepherds of India (Chap. VII), we find that though there are flashes of his genius and intuitive consciousness here and there, we cannot accept all that he has written, just as we may not accept all that Sir Oliver Lodge may perhaps write on such a subject. We can accept Lodge's views in his own domain of special study, Physics, but we cannot accept his views as equally authoritative in the field, say, of anthropology or embryology. We may read with pleasure the romances of Rider Haggard or the detective stories of Conan Doyle, but if they try to speak with authority on agricultural or biological chemistry, we shall have to pause and consider before we can take them seriously. At the outset of our criticism, however, we admit Monsieur Rolland has travelled far afield, though not far enough in his study of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda.

Rolland has admitted that the task of writing a story of Keshab is an extremely difficult one, considering the "duality of his own character, compounded as it was of diverse and incompatible elements of the East and the West, which were in constant conflict with each other" (p. 122). In certain places he has done extremely well in appreciating Keshab, but at the same time one is staggered to find a lack of understanding of the deeper sides of Keshab's contribution to the spiritual life of modern India. The reasons for this, in our humble opinion, are very obvious. The contribution of Keshab cannot be adequately understood without a thorough knowledge of Bengali, and we believe that Mademoiselle Rolland and Monsieur Rolland had not the requisite knowledge or the

materials, *i. e.*, the works of Keshab in Bengali, for the undertaking. Under these circumstances one must give all credit to Rolland for what he has accomplished. That he is a member of the "Republic of Free Spirits" as he claims to be, there is not the least doubt, but he could have used more of his own judgment than what he has done, because we notice that he has followed a story as it was explained to him in a particular way by certain friends. It will be evident that, to our own misfortune, he never cared to consult any living authority on the life and teachings of Keshab. In the summer of 1926, while Dr. Roy was in France, on his way to India from the United States of America, he had planned to visit Rolland in Switzerland but unfortunately Dr. Roy had to give that up owing to shortage of funds. However, on his return to India, he wrote and sent some of our literature to Rolland but did not receive from him any acknowledgment. Dr. Roy was rather surprised and could not proceed any further.

Rolland, it is to be regretted, has not studied the most authentic of the biographies of Keshab. What he has learnt of Keshab is from secondary and tainted sources. How we wish that he had read the prayers, sermons, addresses of Keshab, the hymns and dramas of Troilokyanath, the Lives of different Saints and Prophets by Mazumdar, Upadhyaya Gour Gobinda, Girish Chandra, Aghorenath, Mohendranath and last though not the least the 'Vidhan Bharat', the 'Bhakti-Chaitanya-Chandrika', and 'Isha-Charitamrita' of Troilokyanath all of which bore the mark of Keshab's personality.

It is indeed a pity that Rolland has used secondary and interested sources with regard to Ramkrishna and

Vivekananda and treated them as if they were primary ones, because most of the materials as regards Keshab at his disposal have been vitiated by the interpretation given by the followers of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. We have very good friends in this group, and we yield to none in showing our respect to the sage of Dakshineshwar and also to Vivekananda where he can lay claim to such respect. We want to see their movement grow for we know for certain that though they may not recognise the greatness of Keshab's contribution now owing to the craze for *avatar*-making or the secret conspiracy to misrepresent and belittle Keshab, inorder to glorify Ramkrishna, the day is not far off when Keshab will come into his own and then also Ramkrishna will be far more and better appreciated by 'other sheep' just as he was recognised in the days of Keshab and that through the latter's effort and enterprise.

It may not be perhaps known to many that the chronicler of Ramkrishna's Gospel, "M" was the husband of Keshab's cousin, while B. Mazumdar was a brother of Keshab's wife. Nagendranath Gupta is also related by marriage to Keshab's wife's family. They were all Hindus and never followed Keshab. They liked him but they did not go far enough. They were neither severe critics nor ardent followers. But B. Mazumdar attended meetings both in the Mandir and at Keshab's house (at Colutola and Lily Cottage) pretty regularly and consequently is to be regarded as more reliable than any of the others. In 1874 Pratap Chandra Mazumdar was away in Europe and so he did not have the opportunity of witnessing the commencement of Keshab's *Sadhans* and the new expositions of Yoga, Bhakti, Karma, Jnan

to the selected disciples and which involved discussions on the attributes of God and their correlation to Hindu gods and goddesses (*vide* B. Mazumdar, op. cit., pp. 26 and 27). Monsieur Rolland was perhaps kept ignorant of these. These facts will have to be considered by critics and writers of history. We may also suggest that as Monsieur Rolland had to re-write his statement about Keshab three times before it took its final shape, the two chapters may be rewritten in the light of fresh facts and deeper studies.

In spite of the many disabilities under which Romain Rolland worked it is gratifying to note that he has been able to appreciate Keshab much better than the Indian Publisher. Want of knowledge of the language (both Bengali and English), want of familiarity with the conditions of life in India, specially in Bengal in the latter half of the nineteenth century, want of understanding of the traditions and transitions of society in Bengal have not prevented him altogether from appreciating the many sides of Keshab's character and career. If he has not discovered the inner reconciliation of Keshab's "mental oscillations", of his "divided psychology", it is a singular confirmation of Keshab's assertion of the incomprehensibility of NAVAVIDHAN and of the desirability of practising St. Paul's advice of being all things to all men. That Rolland had to depend on misinformation and misrepresentations and concocted stories, makes it quite easy to condone his strictures and his publication of some most absurd stories and to forgive his under-estimation of Keshab. If we understand the NAVAVIDHAN we can enter into the Spirit of Keshab; that is one way of reconciliation. The other is to understand

Keshab and then enter into the spirit of Navavidhan. Keshab and Navavidhan are so indissolubly united. With Bhai Promotho Lall Sen, one may say, "Had he (Rolland) seen Ramkrishna in the light of the New Dispensation, he would have studied him in his friendship with Keshab and found in their union new possibilities of a New India, and not in the one without the other as his so-called disciples are doing."—(Navavidhan, September 24, 1931.)

CHAPTER IV

JEEVAN VEDA

(KESHAB'S SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

[We give here English translation of three chapters of the "JEEVAN VEDA," viz.—"Independence", "Always Learning", and "Misreading My Life" containing Keshab's own most sincere statements from the pulpit and, as such, are exceedingly valuable. None knew his mind better than he himself.]

INDEPENDENCE

When the Lord, my Maker, laid down the law of my being He made Independence the master-word of my life, saying—"Child, never be subservient to anybody,—this is the most important of all counsels." So from the very first I have been following this injunction, to the best of my ability, in thought, word and deed. Dependence is verily poison, it is hell-fire. Many zealously seek to master this passion or that, to get rid of lust and anger; but no one goes wild over such a declaration of independence as—"I will never be dependent." Providence had, indeed, some mysterious purpose in view; therefore did he implant this passion at the root of my being. O what a hatred of dependence did he inspire me with! I did not speculate on the evil consequences of dependence, the very idea of dependence was as a sin to me. I looked upon dependence as a sin, as a source of evil, as enmity against God.

To this day, I have never been able to bend my head to any one. I had to undergo much suffering for this,

but I have never forsaken my vow. To independence, immovable as a rock, will I cling on. There is indeed a very deep meaning in the injunction, "Be not dependent." The New Dispensation of God—the *Navavidhan* —was to come in the fulness of time. All sorts of errors and false beliefs were to be discarded, and the sovereignty of Truth was to be established in an absolutely independent spirit. For these reasons was the spirit of independence present in me from the very beginning. Independence was the root word from which many momentous issues have sprung to life: "Never let the body and mind be bound by the fetters of dependence, never recognise slavery of any kind, never fall at the feet of any person, never sell yourself to your elders, never be the slave of a particular book and worship it, never be identified with any one sect and sing its praises day and night,"— as on the one side I pledged myself to these, so, on the other I resolved never to be a victim of self-will, never to be a slave of pride, never to spare myself when the call came to fulfil some definite purpose of God.

As the spirit of independence grew in me, I discovered that idolatry, caste and other evils were running rampant in the land. Centuries in succession had suffered the country to remain a slave to these evils; and I arose, sword in hand, to put an end to them. The moment I found that errors, superstitions had been keeping our parents and grandparents in bondage, tyrannizing over our neighbours, my weapons flashed out to put an end to their servitude. How miraculous the power of this mighty *mantra* communicated to me by my *Guru*—God! How many false beliefs are current in the world which keep my brothers and sisters in bondage! To enable me

to take up my stand against all these, Providence did so train me that the very sight of servitude stirred me up. I could never rest quiet; if I found any one a slave to anger, my wrath was kindled against anger itself. I could not tolerate any one's being a slave even to one's father or son. Whenever I found any one a slave to wealth or honour or to a particular sect, my blood would boil. One set of men fall at the feet of another set, and become their bondsmen. There is such a relish for servitude that they continue in bondage for years and years! Servitude to certain women in particular is called wantonness, to men in general slavery, to riches greed. And all these are sins. To be a slave is a sin.

When passion rules the world ruin is inevitable. To whatsoever home or hamlet I go, anger announces exultingly—"See, how numerous are my bondsmen and bondswomen!" Greed says—"Look, how many servitors have I, how many big Rulers, too, am I ruining!" Slave-mentality has entered into all and has been consuming the people. Raze to the dust the citadel of servitude and unfurl the flag of Independence. They say,—"Submit thyself to thy preceptor," my heart answers, "I dare not"; "Obey thy father and mother," I reply, "I dread it"; "Follow the counsels of those who are thy friends, those with whom thou art united in Faith," the spirit within whispers, "I am very much afraid"; "Yield thyself lovingly to those who are specially devoted to thee, who in work and worship are always with thee," the soul declares, "I dread dependence." Never will I be bound by an exclusive attachment to some one friend in particular, for such attachment is dependence. Very intimate friends have noticed that

though I do love I am never enslaved by my affections. So my friends say,—We cannot say this man loves us overmuch, for, inwardly, he sets up his own understanding as his guide, and does not follow our advice. My friends say, do this, but I do it not. I will not do even a good deed at the dictation of another, but do it at the bidding of God. And what I do not at the instance of another, I do with alacrity at the bidding of God. Not till I hear the command of God, will I take up any work. If I have hurt the feelings of friends by not following their advice, neither have I suffered myself to be in subjection to my wife. I have not been bound by any inordinate attachment to my children or my country, nor will I ever be. No one can prove that I have ever been bound either by shackles of subjection or by ties of inordinate affection to any person living or dead.

Independence has always been precious to me,—but not an impious freedom devoid of *bhakti*. I never purchased with silver from the world's market that brand of liberty which springs from self-conceit. I did not seek independence as a means either of exalting myself or of securing a higher place in society. That kind of liberty is, verily, the lawlessness of hell. I do not call it liberty or freedom. I have loved you, yet have not become enslaved by you. If I had appealed to people in some time-serving fashion, my following would have numbered hundreds and thousands. But I made Independence the leader of the Church. Hence I call those who associate with me friends, and never call myself their *guru* or master. Surely independence will triumph in the end. For this do I say again and again,

"Truth will triumph," "Victory unto Truth!" Independence will make its own appeal and bring men together. If they come at its call, let them come; but, rest assured, I will never set myself up as a *guru*. Dependence I heartily abhor; and what I abhor in myself shall I not abhor in others? I cannot bear to see even the least among us servile. That anybody should be in subjection to another in intolerable to me. Equally insufferable is it that anyone should become a creature of my will. Shall I plant my personal beliefs on another man's shoulders? Shall I maintain discipline by imposing my will on others? Shall I bring people to my fold by the alluring phantom of personal attachment? Then, certainly, heaven will kick me out and hell will open its jaws to devour me up. If I get no following, if even a single soul be not left unto me, I will never make another man my slave since I myself have never been one.

Do any of you know of my ever being in bondage to another? When I have never been in servitude myself, why should any of you be? Who so great a sinner and hypocrite as he who, not suffering himself to be a slave, seeks to enslave others or laughs at those in servitude? A *guru* I am not, nor have I sought to enslave others. I have always been engaged in teaching, which means I am a seeker after truth—ever eager to learn. If there are fifty men in my fold, they are of fifty different types. If a hundred men have come into this communion, each is his own master. Everyone will have to admit this while I am here on this earth, everyone will bear witness to it when I am gone. No one in this fold breathes the air of servitude; everyone lives

and moves in Independence. I never seek to put anyone through the grindmill; I want to see everyman free. I exhort people not to call any human being by the name of *guru* or governor; I look upon God as the only *Guru* and Governor. If anyone with a slave-mentality has sneaked in here, like a fraud, I will have him turned out. This is no community of slaves. When he, on whom rests the whole burden of the community, is himself free, no individual in his fold shall be in subjection. For everyone is entrusted with a definite task, a solemn mission which none else can fulfil.

I do not want to follow blindly even an exceptionally sound doctrine. I will not be a blind leader of the blind. Independence is verily, a mighty *mantra;* but one may ask,—if it is carried so far, will it not lead to licence? No, for that is how independence fulfils itself. If you acknowledge the authority of the One Father and Mother of all, you will not need to be in subjection to your own father and mother. It is this spirit that has led me to carry the cult of independence even into the sphere of religious life. For there are many who have broken loose from orthodox family ties but have become slaves to newly formed ties in the Brahmo Samaj. Again, there are others who never become creatures of the world, but who on entering a religious order come to believe in a particular book as infallible and become its bond-slaves. I have kept myself aloof from the lure of all these. Why regard a particular book as infallible? Why take refuge in a particular man? I give glory to the adorable Jesus, I offer love and reverence to Sri Chaitanya, but I do not set them up as life's perfect ideal. Call me conceited if you like, call me even wicked if

you will. But I have never regarded, nor ever will, any human being as the ideal of my life. Man can never be the full and perfect ideal. Where the light of Jesus cannot reach. God Himself appears there as the Resplendent Ideal, and by His own light illumines all. There is no book which contains all wisdom, and so I have accepted none as my ideal. Who loves the Sons of God as I do? And yet I say,—"I will not dishonour the Father by my acceptance of them as the ideals of my life. I will not dishonour the Father by my excessive reverence for the Bible and the *Puranas*. I will always abide with my God. I will not be a slave to anyone either in heaven or on earth".

The tiger-skin * is dear to me and so is the *ektara* † But if I become enamoured of them they will come to usurp the place of God in my life. Just for the day's use I take them up temporarily, and renounce them on the morrow. To-day, during worship, I give the tiger-skin an honoured place for the time, a couple of hours later I put it aside and think of it no more. I will never be a slave to external observances or religious exercises. Who does not know people who relinquished their greed of gold only to succumb to the spell of the tiger-skin? Hence my soul has always been on its guard lest it fall under the spell of, or be dependent on any object—flowers, *gairic* (yellow robe), or the tiger-skin. Their work done, why cling to them longer? They did not, at any rate, come to make a slave of me. The need was mine, not theirs. If there be the least attachment

* Used as carpet in worship.

† One stringed instrument played with the hymns.

to anything whatsoever, be it a religious rite or anything of the kind, it will fester as hell-fire within.

In the *Navavidhan* there is perfect liberty for every individual. The *Guru*—who is he? The Brahmo Samaj—what is it? My Brahmo fellow-believers—who are they? To none of these have I any attachment. I will hold on to that only which is the reality—the substance. I am ready to give up, if need be, even the name, but the substance never. And, for this reason, there is no agreement between others and me. If I take to the profession of a *guru*, I can swell the number of my adherents. But that I will never do. May the Lord so bless me that I may maintain, in all its fulness, the spirit of independence in myself and my brethren. Can there ever be any increase in numbers by this means? Well, whatever increase in numbers comes must come through independence. And, then, on such emancipated souls will flowers be showered from heaven, and they will abide with the Father, and will no more be led astray by self-will. Sins, errors, superstitions—let all these be arrayed on one side, and on the other rank, self-will, arrogance and conceit,—then hurl on both, the weapon of independence! When we have surrendered ourselves wholly to God, then and then only are we truly independent.

O Lord of Mercy, Thou Free Spirit! How wonderful is this mighty *mantra*—this magic word independence! Since Thou hast in Thy mercy established me in independence, do Thou for my good and the good of my brothers and sisters, increase in us all the spirit of independence. The thought of sin by itself is well-nigh killing; and over and above it, vices, errors and cramping customs

have flung their tentacles round the lives of Thy children. On top of all, various kinds of evil propensities press heavily on their shoulders. Mother, we should be serving Thee, but whom are we serving instead? Spiritual death is the penalty we pay for being in the service of the god of worldliness. A load of insufferable servitude weighs upon our bodies and minds. Dependence has been taking the life out of men.—*O dispenser of independence! where art Thou at this crisis? Why should people undergo so much suffering? Let a war be waged against slave-mentality. O Mother, Might embodied! with Thy thundering war-cry, scatter Thou the hostile hosts. No more will we be in bondage to others.*— O Mother, Bliss Incarnate! no more will I turn to sin or be enslaved by passions. I will do what Thou dost bid me do, go where Thou dost bid me go, and abstain from eating what is forbidden. I will never more be a slave to any evil habit. How my spirit smarts when my conscience upbraids me, saying—"A Mother who loves you so dearly, Her behests you did not carry out, Her pleadings you set at naught, Her you insulted!" Yes, Mother, we do understand now what a terrible hell is dependence and servitude. O, save Thy sinning children. Snap asunder the iron chains, O Lord, so that, with brothers and friends, we may be like free birds flitting about, wandering at will, in the garden of paradise and partaking of the fruits thereof. May we be no more confined within the cage of dependence, but like the free creatures of the upper air soar at will in the heavens. Gracious One, have mercy on us, bless us that we may be happy by making the right use of Thy gift of Independence. Father, this is my prayer to Thee!

ALWAYS LEARNING

This world is God's university for humanity. So long as we are here, we are to possess God through wisdom and righteousness. I have never looked upon myself as a teacher, nor will ever do so. I am a born learner, I live as a learner, I shall ever remain a learner. The cardinal principle of the Sikh religion—that of discipleship, is latent in my blood. It is this spirit that flows in my blood, infusing strength and vigour into my life. Having always learnt in the past, I am learning still, and my one ambition is to go on learning for ever. Morning and noon find me intent on learning, prosperity and adversity find me mastering new chapters of the sacred book of God. Every living thing, in particular, is my preceptor, every object is my teacher, and I learn many things from human nature. When I open my eyes I find myself in a vast university, and when I close them a still vaster university I find within. Just as my passion for knowledge is immense, so the knowledge to be acquired is endless. Truths of various kinds and the wisdom that saves lie open before me. I have never thought that there will be an end to learning; for want of books the zeal to learn has never suffered. To learn is the one business of my life; I find abundant life and salvation in it. Indeed, all the treasures I have thus gained I cannot cease recounting, and I feel there are so many more in store for me!

Many are the teachers who have taught me truths. The heavens above, the fowls of the air and the fishes of the water,—all are my preceptors *(guru)*, and to all of these I am in pupilage. It is not as a religious

obligation or from a sense of duty that I have cultivated it, but it is there in my nature and I delight in it. In the discovery of a new truth in ethics or religion I find more joy than the discoverer of America found in his discovery, or a sight-seer in the striking sights which meet his eye. I am in ecstasies when I apprehend a truth. I have not arrived at truth through the slow process of reasoning and analysis like the student of comparative religion; but like lightning in darkness truths flash across my mind. The process is like this.

When I am looking at an object, a tree, for instance, or I am engaged in some work, it seems Some One suddenly brings me a message. In a flash the whole soul is illumined, the whole being is stirred to the depths. Each truth comes with a shock; compared with truths already discovered those which I now find are entirely new ones. The discovery of each new truth has brought in new peace and joy. And I beheld with joy overflowing how the Divine Mother dispenses, in this way, Her revelations to Her loved ones!

Each revelation brings a special benefit: while it satisfies the reason, it adds to the character the "beauty of holiness". But for the *joy* it brings who would have entered on such business? I cannot, therefore, set up as a teacher who has mastered his subject, having successfully gone through the prescribed courses of studies. I never thought that I have learnt all I ought to from the Divine Preceptor. I did not think so when I taught in the Brahmo Theological School, nor do I think so now when I occupy the honoured pulpit of the Brahma Mandir. Whether learning or teaching I am a learner always, and I have never thought that learning

has ceased for me, and I am now to become a teacher. When engaged in spiritual exercises with fellow-believers I gather precious truths, and my heart rejoices. I do feel that it was the good providence of God which brought me into the world. Human life is, indeed, a blessing! Can the joy of teaching be as great as the joy of learning? The human soul has spiritual affinity with truth. When I receive a new truth I feel as if I conquer a new world, as if I come into a vast spiritual possession.

A musician while practising either with Indian or European instruments, is transported with joy when he comes upon a new tune. Finding that a new tune has issued from his throat, that *Saraswati* * has graciously revealed it to him, he goes into raptures. Indeed what heart can contain the joy that comes from the acquisition of new treasures? The fisherman whose daily catch consists of the ordinary varieties of fish supplying his necessities, feels rewarded for his labours. But if such a one, on a certain morning, finds a new variety of fish, unseen and unknown before, how great must be his joy, passing like an electric current through his whole being. An artist while reproducing on canvas all the familiar touches learnt from his master, if he suddenly comes upon a new trick of colour-combination or expression, or envisages a new type of beauty, how he would exclaim—"Whence has come this new creation? Blessed be God; blessed is this life of mine!" An astronomer, in the course of his usual observation of the heavens, discovering a new luminary will hasten to announce his joy to the world, feeling that it makes him more rich

* Goddess of Fine Arts and wisdom.

and proud than if he suddenly found himself a millionaire or an emperor! So, likewise, is my joy in the discovery of a new truth, yea,—a joy greater than that of all these. Who cares to be the lord of an empire or of millions of money if, by God's grace, he can be blessed with new truths; for no happiness can be greater than this?

I consider myself blessed because of the spirit of discipleship in me. I still regard myself as a student who is not yet out of school. It seems the four Vedas will never be wholly mastered: the role of the disciple will never be over. The stupendous Himalayas but symbolize the immensity of all wisdom. On every side I find evidence that culture, both general and special, is indeed boundless. Whether it is *bhakti* or God-vision, which I am cultivating, there seems to be no end to it. What wonderful things have I heard from the lips of God about the harmony of the scriptures of the world! And yet it seems so much more remains to be heard. Can he whose preceptor is the Living God Himself ever lack in new visions of truth? I have not sat at the feet of any ordinary teacher; the Lord of the universe is my *Guru*. He has been teaching me continually; and the more I learn the more is my pride humbled. Forty years have passed away and yet my learning is not completed. Many are the secrets of prayer I have learnt, and yet so much more remains to be learnt. I have yet to know how better to sing the sweet name of God: I have not yet been able to exhaust the meaning of the term love. That is why I cry shame upon myself; and every time I cry shame a new truth is revealed. Thus have I received new truths and consider myself blessed. Thrice blessed am I for I am always learning!

I have not, indeed, set myself up as a teacher but neither have I, like a selfish miser, kept the precious truths to myself. I have practised the rule—how to receive, but never followed the other—how to bestow. By an inner law, truth which enters into a mind, finds its way out. We who have followed this principle find that truth when it comes into our mind proclaims itself. There are two doors to our houses one for the import and the other for the export of truths. Truth comes into the mind, and when it goes out into the world, it returns to me with its power doubled; and when it goes out again its power increases, coming back again, increases a hundred-fold. It increases when stored up in the heart, it increases still more when spent for the good of mankind. The joy I experience in receiving it, increases in spending it. All my eagerness is in acquiring truth and not in imparting it. Before I open my lips I am never anxious about what I have to say. Whenever I have to preach, truth rushes out of its own force. The business of the professional teacher *(guru)* is indeed vain; it was never mine.

I have never dealt in old things repeating this year what I taught last year. The lecture or prayer offered before, if reproduced now, would make me guilty of that *gurugiri* (posing as a professional teacher) which seeks to capture the hearts of the multitude by tricks of the trade. It would appear then as if the fountain of my inspiration has run dry, and that I am doling out silt and mud or, worse still, hard baked earth. But I never had to confess to such a calamity. As in other things, here too, the blessing of the Lord has been with me. I have never been in anxiety as regards the matter

when I have to speak or think or write. I would not enact to-morrow yesterday's history, nor chew the cud of the past. I would be ashamed to do so, and God, my *guru,* would be displeased with me.

What I said or taught did not concern me, only what I learnt. If ever I become self-conscious in my ministrations my tongue sticks to the palate, words fail me and numbness seizes my body and mind. If I learn, others learn with me; if truths are found by me, others come into their possession. When a truth has been announced in my soul it will be proclaimed to the whole world with the accompaniment of bells and conch-shells; for it is the law of spiritual communication that it is transmitted, like an electric current, from one person to another, with all its power and authority. When I look at India I see that what I am taught India learns too. It seems, a bird carries in its beak truths from one home to all homes. My heart is joined with the hearts of my fellows with such secret strings that when a truth comes into my heart I find it in all other hearts. When the light of the sun reveals itself, there it illumines all other minds. The same truth enters the poor man's hut as well as the rich man's palace. All glory be to God that truth is thus conveyed from one mind to a thousand minds.

We are here to learn always; let us have no other ambition. Whoever it be, even an ordinary street singer, I love to learn sitting at his feet believing that when anyone comes he comes with a new message, and I am sure to get it out of him. No one goes away without in this way enriching me. I have been blessed with the gift of drawing out from the good what is good in

them, and when good people leave me I feel they have poured into my being some of their goodness. I become somewhat like them. From all, even the lowest animals, I would learn, for I am a learner from my birth. I have been learning all along, and my learning will never end. As a learner I will pass from this world into the next.

Thou True Teacher! Thou hast been pleased to teach and to reveal so many things unto me. I thank Thee for feeding my soul with new truths even as my body is fed with fresh food. How can I give adequate expression to the mysterious workings within me? Untold happiness have I gathered by sitting at Thy feet, and learning. The advent of a new truth makes me wild with joy, and I want to shout at the top of my voice: "Whence this truth? Who brought it to me?" Without Thee I am so helpless. Mother, having found in Thee the True Teacher have I sought any other? My ambition has never been to be a university graduate or a *tol pundit*. The dust of Thy feet is the source of all wisdom and inspiration to me. I have not aspired to any other wisdom; therefore hast Thou been to me the Teacher of all the Vedas and the Vedantas, literature and history! He whose Mother is the goddess of wisdom (*Saraswati*) finds his house to be verily a *Brahmavidyalaya*, and his teaching is never neglected. O Mother, let us always remain *Sikhs* (learners). Why is there such a profusion of teachers in the world? Why are ordinary people so puffed up, refusing to be taught, pretending only to teach? O grant unto men a better understanding: let them teach by learning. One need not go about—to preach; for truth when it comes publishes

itself. If there is an end to learning there will be an end to teaching. If Thou makest us disciples of infinite wisdom then our receiving as well as imparting of truth will go on for ever. Never had I to feel that God's revelations have ceased to come: they are coming in heaps. The rest of my life will be spent in gathering more and more of them. I shall always be a pupil in *Vedavidyalaya*. Teach these fellow-worshippers of mine thousands of newly revealed *Vedas*. Destroy our pride and make us humble. We will be loyal to our vow of discipleship as long as we live. Bless us that, receiving Thy redeeming truths, we may be clad in the beauty of holiness!

MISREADING MY LIFE

There be those who, not having studied the scripture of my life—all the chapters in relation to the whole, have said things which are not true; they will be guilty of uttering untruth before God and Man. These untruths ought to be thoroughly sifted and clearly stated; and what is wrong and false in these statements ought to be exposed. Who are the people guilty of telling falsehood? Who are the offenders?

This pulpit does not hesitate to call them liars who have classed me, a worm of hell, along with the revered and exalted heaven-sent world-prophets,—with Christ and Chaitanya, the inspirer of holiness and the guide to salvation. It is a most preposterous thing for me to be classed with those the dust of whose feet I am not fit to touch with my forehead. Those whom the love and reverence of the whole world have placed at such a distance, and from whom the world has

received the blessings of salvation, would find me approaching them as a sinner approaches saints, in search of the same thing, and not as one presuming to be seated on the same level with them. For, I consider it my glory to sit at their feet, listen to their precepts and follow their example. The very taking of their name sanctifies me, causes me to dance in joy: and herein is my peace and happiness.

Again, this pulpit pronounces them guilty of falsehood who assert that I am sinless, spotless, and one of the greatest of saints. For it is written in my *Jeevan Veda* that there were a great many sins in me, that great faults and blemishes were intertwined with the root of evil in my being which have not yet been cut asunder. Let no one class me with holy men whose very name sanctifies. Rather, let them think of me as one of the many sinners who have to struggle with their secret sins and pray for deliverance from them. Like them, too, I am a curious mixture of good and evil.

Just as others, in spite of imperfections, receive truths from God and are encouraged to preach these to others, so do I also. That I am a minister *(Acharya)* does not mean that I am freed from all sins, and having become sinless myself am now helping others to become so. Why have I assumed the role of a preacher, a minister to pass on to others the precious truths that come to me? Conscious of my own sinfulness I should be ashamed to take minister's seat with the purpose of ministering to their spiritual good. I have made up my mind to give unto others the little that I receive from Heaven. Though I am not fit to be classed with the great prophets, though I am not fit even to sit at the

feet of saints and seers, yet it must be admitted that with their holy name on my lips I am intent on the conquest of my passions; and wisdom and holiness, love and peace are continually flowing from God's spirit into mine.

They too lie who say that this person has not seen God nor heard His voice. Rather, this *Jeevan Veda* makes it clear that the contrary is the truth, that I both see and hear Him, and that my very existence depends on doing so. They, therefore, speak the truth who maintain that, in spite of my imperfections, I have, not once or twice but a hundred thousand times, been given to see Him and drink in the nectar of His words which has not only sanctified and sweetened my life but increased my thirst for more. On the contrary, those who maintain that I have neither seen God nor heard His voice, that my God-vision is a delusion and a figment of the imagination, them the world will, sooner or later, brand as liars. For I see God as clearly as I do external objects; I hear the voice of Him Whom I worship as my God and love as my friend. These are just as easy and natural as the act of eating and drinking. They, therefore, are also liars who because of these say that I am superior to others.

Those who deny my God-vision and inspiration are just as guilty of falsehood as those who because of these rank me with the highest. To see God and hear Him are no marks of extraordinariness. I think as He inspires me, speak as He prompts, preach as He instructs me. My intercourse with Him is wonderfully simple and natural. If there is any other occult experience of God I have nothing to do with it. Here my experience

agrees with those of other genuine lovers and devotees of God. As in seeing and hearing outer sights and sounds there can be no mistake, so in my seeing and learning God.

He indulges in a lie who thinks that like a good many other people I depend on my worldly wisdom and engage in undertakings after a good deal of speculation and consultation with others. They know the fact and speak the truth who believe that I have been appointed by God to certain offices, that of His own good-will He reveals truths to me and provides for my family. They lie who accuse me of cleverly concocting a harmony of religions, and with super-human effort can make mountains move. Such are the many contradictory statements made about myself. I am he who from the beginning of his religious career has renounced all worldly pursuits, who trusts like a little child thinking not for the morrow, who seeks not the counsel of men, nor is guided by the decision of any committee of executives, who looks up to Heaven alone and follows whatever intimations come from out of the dark unknown. I am he whose life has been the storm centre of terrible trials for full twenty-five years, and who has not only come out of them all triumphant, but can face greater trials, filled with the faith and assurance that come from within. How God guides man is clearly seen in this man's life. There is One Who guides and one who is guided ; there is One Who cares and one who casts all care on Him,—this is the secret of my *Jeevan Veda*. This person did not take up any profession or trade to maintain himself ; it is God Himself Who has provided for him and provides for him still. Those who regard

this as a mark of anything extraordinary are liars. For, there are millions and millions of devotees who, like myself, have surrendered their lives to God. It is not at all extraordinary. We have on record numerous instances of such dedicated lives. There can be no doubt of the fact that as the Holy Spirit in man, God regulates human lives. Therefore, do not say, O Brahmos, that our minister, by publishing this fact in his *Jeevan Veda,* has exalted himself above others. A man may be poor and illiterate, and yet God as the Merciful Mother guides him in the path of rectitude and earthly welfare.

Then, again, he is a liar who calls me rich and learned. I do not count myself as one of the rich, the honoured and the learned. You can never truthfully call me rich, for, besides the house I live in, I cannot be said to have a single copper with me. Therefore, it is an error of judgment or sheer ignorance to class me with the rich. Those who know the true state of affairs will testify that there is no sure provision for to-morrow's needs. It is the Lord Himself Who is the source of all supplies. On the other hand, they also utter falsehood who want to class me with the poor; for just as I do not call myself rich so I do not call myself poor either. Who indeed should be called poor? He who mourns his lot and is miserable. The Lord has not cast my lot with these. If, indeed, one who has no riches can be called rich then I am that one. I consider earthly riches as of no account. He is the treasure in Whom I depend in singleness of heart, not caring for the morrow. Why should I be anxious when I have One Who cares? Riches I have none in my possession, they are all in God's treasury. The Father

Divine has everything; it only remains for me to go to Him and ask for it. But those who having invested money in a bank, bringing them a big monthly interest, imagine that they have thus kept the wolf from the door, rest under a false sense of security.

Like my riches my learning, too, is not of this earth. With truth as my witness I declare I do not know what even an ordinary educated man does. I have not the power of expression for the little that I do know. A complete university education I cannot lay claim to. Any comparison with the learned would be a gross misrepresentation. I have not all that makes one a learned man among learned men. This does not mean that I have no zeal for true knowledge, nor is it to be understood that I do not know of God or cannot speak of Him. One Who is the source of all wisdom lives with me, and my eyes are on Him. All my lack of learning is made up by what I learn from Him,—the Fountain-head of all sacred wisdom. If He confounds me not and gives me utterance then only can I speak.

And honour? The source of all my honour is Hari (God) Himself. Indeed all that is mine is His. That people among the high honour me with visits I consider it as a matter of favour. The world's honour has never been nor ever will be mine. No honour have I received from any earthly source; consequently there is no fear of my losing it. God Himself is my Treasure, my knowledge and Wisdom, my Honour and my Influence!

After all this, it can be easily found out who have misread my life and who are guilty of falsehood with regard to it. The sum and substance of my *Jeevan Veda* is that of my own will I have never achieved anything.

Riches, learning, honour and peace are nowhere to be found except at the feet of God. He is all-in-all. Everyone should now think of the way how their own lives may be guided by God like my own.

Thou Friend and Refuge of the humble, the last twenty-five years of my life are a living witness unto Thee. May this life of mine reveal Thee to the world, and I shall be blessed. As for me what can I credit myself with but sin? As for Thee Thou hast done all that I may glory in, saving me from all perils, giving me learning, wisdom and insight into all sacred lore. I of my own self cannot vanquish sin. Lord, come reveal Thyself anew to me that I may bear witness unto what Thou hast done and art doing in my life. Thy touch has transmuted a life of dross into one of gold; my heart has become as a piece of diamond. Him who was of no account hast Thou exalted. I who like an ant used to come in and out of its hole, carrying a grain of rice, I am now raised to the *Vedi* (pulpit) of the Brahma Mandir. How has all this come about? He whom Thou choosest to favour with riches, honour and wisdom, comes to the blessed. He whom the Lord makes happy, is happy. Let the world study this *Jeevan Veda*, discuss its contents, not in order to praise me but to remove from men's minds the old notion that God is very far off, and has ceased to deal with His *Bhaktas* in the wonderful way He used to do in the past. O God, I will wipe out this lie with my life-blood. Let men read every word of the life of this sinner, and let faith and *bhakti* surge up mightily within them. Thou Who hast given me money and means, knowledge and so many other things, be Thou pleased to grant this prayer:—

May my ministrations from this pulpit redound to the good of all, may men looking at my life realize from what a low state I have been lifted up, and how one who had nothing now possesses so much! Look at the tiny bark of my life brought almost to the haven of paradise. O God I am Thine, Thine alone am I. I will speak and act as Thou biddest me. May men read this *Jeevan Veda* and say how good Thou art, and may its study bring to Thy lotus feet the whole world flooding it with divine love and *bhakti*. This is the blessing I ask of Thee.—*The New Veda* or *Jeevan Veda* (in English).

CHAPTER V

WITNESSES WITH PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

(A)—REV. GOUR GOBINDA ROY

"ACHARYA KESHAB CHANDRA"

(Translated from Bengali, Centenary Edition pp. 1041-43 and 1144-45)

At this time (about March 1875) Keshab Chandra met Paramhansa Ramkrishna at the *Tapoban* in Belghoria Garden House. The latter had, along with his nephew Hriday, gone over to Keshab's residential house at Colutola to see him, and having learnt that Keshab and his friends were engaged in *Sadhan* (religious exercises) in the Belghoria Garden House, the uncle and nephew repaired there the very next morning, so anxious was the Paramhansa to meet Keshab. They drove into the garden in a hackney carriage, and alighted at the south-western *ghat* of the tank in it for a wash. Ramkrishna wore a single red-bordered piece of cloth—he had no upper garment and looked as if he had been ailing for a considerable length of time. Keshab and his friends were sitting on the landing of the big *ghat* to the east of the tank, and were getting ready for ablution, when Ramkrishna and his nephew approached them. The nephew said that his uncle was anxious to have a discourse with Keshab about God, had been to his place at Colutola, and came over to the garden as he learnt that Keshab was there. The appearance of

Ramkrishna did not evoke much respect: he and his nephew were offered seats as ordinary visitors. The Paramhansa—(but none could divine his identity at the time)—was the first to speak, and asked "Babu, is it a fact that you see God, if so, how is it?" As the conversation proceeded Ramkrishna started singing a song of Ramprasad, suited to the occasion—and fell into a trance. His nephew Hriday began to pronounce 'Om,' and requested others to do so also. Tears of joy then came to the eyes of the Paramhansa, he began to smile occasionally, and at last regained consciousness. This incident did not make much impression on the Brahmo missionaries present. All of them were, however, surprised when, later on, Ramkrishna began discoursing on spiritual subjects, coupled with apt and pithy illustrations. He went on to make observations as follows:—"as sounds come out from the frying pan when *loochis* * are first put in the halfboiled ghee but the sounds cease as the *ghee* gets fully boiled, so there is much show where there is little wisdom, and none when the wisdom is deep."—"The young monkey clings to the breast of its mother, the kitten mews—the former signifies the spirit of reliance, the latter of prayer."—"No sooner its tail falls off, the tadpole becomes a frog and begins to jump about; so the ordinary human being attains salvation directly he severs bonds of mundane attachment,"—and so forth. He concluded by referring to his reception at the garden and the subsequent treatment and said that "when any strange animal intrudes into a herd of cattle, all the cows combine in pushing it with horns and driving it out, but if it is a cow, they first of all smell it, and

* A kind of thin pan cake fried in clarified butter.

when they discover that it is one of their own species, they lick one another; devotees also commingle in this way." It was on this occasion that Keshab first came to know Ramkrishna, though the Paramhansa had known him from before. Ramkrishna had once attended the Calcutta (Adi) Brahmo Samaj. He was a good judge of men. As everyone was seated for Divine Worship, he said, he felt as if they had been fighting with swords and shields; on seeing Keshab, (he did not know it was Keshab), he remarked to Hriday, "this man has hooked the fish" (dived deep into God).

This meeting of the Paramhansa and Keshab Chandra was a happy union. It was not possible a day earlier or later. Whenever Keshab was in a particular frame of mind, helpful environments used to appear. When he began to imbibe *Bhakti (Vaishnava* piety) everything necessary and helpful for the occasion came over one by one. He well knew how to make good use of all the opportunities offered by God; or, so to speak, God Himself taught Keshab how usefully to employ them. Not even an ordinary *Vaishnava* mendicant of the street was unwelcome to him since the time he took to the sadhan of *Bhakti*. The upper storeys of his house to which an ordinary mendicant had no access, and no *khol* or *kartal* (drums and cymbals) could be found, were now almost always filled with them. Blessed was his mood of a disciple. Even a street-beggar had a lesson for him. When Yoga (communion with God), Asceticism and Motherhood of God had got hold of Keshab's mind, men helpful in furtherance of such moods used to appear before him. And Keshab Chandra knew Who had sent them to him. The relation of Keshab and Paramhansa

deepened so much even in the course of a day that there was no parting them.

The *Shaktas*, a sect of Hindus who worship God as *Shakti* (spirit of Force), have an abundance of the mood of the Motherhood of God but along with it, it carries a spirit of great vice. The devotee considers himself as the 'Bhairab', the Female taken for worship is the 'Bhairabi' (his wife). So theirs could scarcely be a mood of motherly love. The Paramhansa, though a *Shakta*, was a worshipper of the Motherhood of God in the real sense. The special feature of his worship was that he was the son, and every woman was his mother. The ordinary *Shaktas* were no respecter of discipline, were unrestrained in their passions and addicted to alcoholic drink and animal food. But the Paramhansa had none of these vices; he totally abstained from luxury and indulgences of all kinds and had conquered the passions of sex and greed. Although a worshipper of *Shakti*, and a Hindu Yogi, he had no hatred for other religions, but on the contrary used to respect the founders of all religions and regard them as incarnations of God. His house was decorated with the portraits of all the great saints. Keshab Chandra's joy knew no bounds on coming across such a personage.

There grew up a deep love between Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Keshab Chandra day by day. It became almost a daily practice with Ramkrishna and Keshab and his party to come to each other on each and every occasion. The very sight of Keshab was sufficient to set up an upheaval in the emotional soul of Ramkrishna. As soon as they met Ramkrishna could not live in the realm of the finite but his heart was lifted

up to the Infinite, so that he often fell into deep trance, spoke incoherently, and fainted at the mere presence of Keshab. After a long time he would regain consciousness and then would talk so much that others could not utter a single word. Thought after thought rushed into his mind and he would stop others to give out his own perception. Sometimes Ramkrishna took sweets in front of Keshab's cottage, or was singing songs or absorbed in deep meditation; then he joked that although his stomach was full he could find space for a piece of *Jilabi* (a sweet of which he was very fond),—just as an ordinary person might find it difficult to enter into a crowd but there would be passage for the King through it.—All these are still vividly passing before our mental eyes. Once, after the 'Utsav' was over, Ramkrishna arrived at the Mandir with his nephew Hriday. Nobody was there. He had the door of the Mandir opened by the Darwan and on entering fainted away at once. On being questioned about it afterwards he replied that the sanctity and the sombre atmosphere of the place touched his heart and it came into his mind that it was the place for the worship of the *Para-Brahma* (Almighty God) and then he could not restrain his emotion. Ramkrishna had not seen the Mandir before this.

Note—Upadhyaya Gour Gobinda's Bengali articles:
নবযুগের নবসন্ন্যাস (Navayuger Navasanyas),
শ্রৌতাচারের পুনরাবৃত্তি (Srautacharer Punaravritti),
অত্যাশ্রমী কেশবচন্দ্রের আশ্রমধর্ম্ম (Atyashrami Keshab Chandrer Ashramdharma)
will be very useful and interesting study in order to understand Keshab and his religion properly.

(B)—REV. BHAI GIRISH CHANDRA SEN

"PARAMHANSER UKTI O SANKHIPTA JIBANI"

Sayings of Ramkrishna Paramhansa and a brief life-sketch 1886

(Translated from Bengali)

Ramkrishna lived in a secluded spot in a room of a one-storeyed house on the banks of the Ganges, at the farthest end of the group of temples which go by the name of Dakshineshwar Devalaya. He seldom visited any place except his own home where even he went on rare occasions only. Having returned from a pilgrimage in company of one Mathura Babu, at Dakshineshwar he became totally absorbed in meditation and was lost in the spiritual rapture of *Bhakti* (Divine love) and deep meditation. He was selfcentred and was scarcely visited by people, nor was he much known to the public. The people of the adjacent villages took him for a mad man. Ramkrishna found in his nephew, Hriday Bhattacharya, a faithful attendant who used to serve him with unflinching devotion. In March 1875 (Falgun or Choitra, 1796 Shak) one day, at about 8 or 9 A.M., Ramkrishna accompanied by Hriday came to the garden of Babu Joygopal Sen at Belghoria where Acharya Keshab Chandra Sen, with his missionary friends, was staying for the purpose of *sadhan and bhajan* (devotional exercises). The party used to cook their own meals and eat them under the shady trees, practising strict rules of self-control and renunciation. Ramkrishna had first gone to Keshab's residence in Colutola quarter of Calcutta with a view to call on him. There he was informed that Keshab was staying in the Belghoria Garden for devotional

exercises—*sadhan* and *bhajan*. Thence he came to this garden. When Ramkrishna arrived there in a hackney carriage, just then Keshab with his friends was making preparations on the pucca landing of the tank within the garden for their daily bath (ablution before prayers). Hriday on alighting from the carriage went to inform Keshab that his uncle was desirous of seeing him, as he liked very much to listen to the glories of God and he came there with the express intention of hearing those from Keshab's own lips. He also informed him that his uncle was in the habit of falling into a trance during religious discourses. Hriday was asked to conduct his uncle where they were. Ramkrishna was plainly dressed in a single piece of red-bordered *dhoti* only, he had no shirt or *chaldar*. The end of the *dhoti* was flung across his shoulders. His body was much emaciated and he looked rather weak. The missionary friends of Keshab at first took him for an ordinary man. Ramkrishna addressed the party thus:

"I have heard that you have seen God. I am anxious to know what it is like."

Thus started the discourses on religious topics. Then Ramkrishna sang a hymn of Ramprasad and immediately fell into a trance. Those present there did not think much of it, at that time, they thought it was an affectation. Hriday, however, at once started uttering loudly the sacred symbolic word 'Om' (Hindu sign of the Triad) and invited the others to do the same. This brought Ramkrishna round to partial consciousness and he began to laugh; and then followed a stream of inspiring words from him. This astounded the missionary friends who then realised that they were in the presence

of a man of God and not an ordinary human being or a mere man of the street. The party engrossed in the sweet company of Ramkrishna, for the time being, forgot altogether all about their ablutions and prayers and devotional exercises which they performed later on.

This day Ramkrishna expressed the following ideas in the course of his conversation:

"When a strange animal comes to a herd of cows, the latter goad it away with their horns, but if the animal happens to be a cow, those of the herd begin to lick its body."

"A tadpole, as soon as its tail falls off, comes out of the water and hops on the ground."

A devotee can at once know another devotee. Keshab was charmed and was attracted towards Paramhansa and the latter in his turn was closely drawn to Keshab. Thenceforward a very close intimacy grew up between these two souls. Keshab with his party began to visit Ramkrishna often, and Ramkrishna with Hriday used to come to Keshab's place. At Ramkrishna's arrival a big crowd would usually gather around him, among whom could be noticed the relatives, friends and neighbours of Keshab. At their meeting several hours were occupied in talks on different topics of religious interest culminating in the enjoyment of an intense spiritual fellowship. At the end of the *Utsab* every year Keshab with his co-workers and other Brahmos used to go to Ramkrishna by a steamer or a boat; or Keshab used to send a conveyance for Ramkrishna to bring him to the *tapoban* at Belghoria. To talk with Ramkrishna on spiritual matters and to join in merriment with him became a part of the programme of the annual Utsab. Both Keshab

and Ramkrishna were mutually benefited by the spiritual influence which each exerted upon the other. It was the life of the Paramhansa that intensified the culture of the Motherhood of God, in the Brahmo Samaj.

To call upon God in the sweet name of "Ma" (Mother) as a simple child does, to pray to Her and crave indulgences like a child—this habit our Minister received in a special way from the influence of the Paramhansa.

Notwithstanding the element of *bhakti* to be found in the Brahmo religion, it was predominantly then a religion of Faith, Rationalism and dry disputations. The shadow of the life of Ramkrishna made it moist, fresh and sweet. On the other hand Paramhansadeb coming in contact with Keshab advanced more towards the realization of a formless God. He further profited by this contact in acquiring liberalism in religion and to a certain extent in learning the rules and discipline of cultured society.

When both Keshab (with his party) and Paramhansa used to exchange visits frequently and Keshab began to write in the public press and proclaim the high ideals and character of Paramhansa, in books and also in the 'Dharmatattwa' and 'Indian Mirror' (which was then an organ of the Brahmo Samaj), and his sayings were published in the booklet named "Paramhanser Ukti" it was then, AND NOT BEFORE, that Paramhansa came into the lime light, and the Brahmos as well as men and women of other classes began to call on him oftener and to hear from his lips fine words full of instructions. To give a new religion, to preach any truth or to found a new sect was not in Paramhansa's line, nor in his province. When anybody applied to him for instructions in religious matters he used to point at Keshab and say it

was the latter's province and not his. But subsequently he gave instructions regarding *sadhan* and *bhajan* regularly to serveral persons. Many well-educated youngmen became his devoted disciples. It is said that he had nearly five hundred such disciples—men and women. But he did not call anybody his disciple, nor himself a Guru of anybody. He was dead against the prevalent professions of priests and Gurus.

Paramhansadeb had a wonderful power of understanding human nature. He could even from a mere glance at a man or by exchanging a few words with him ascertain what stuff he was made of.

Ramkrishna (Paramhansa) once said:

"Long ago, on a Wednesday, I had been to the Brahmo Samaj of Jorasanka. There I found young Keshab conducting Divine service from the pulpit. On both sides of him a large number of worshippers were seated. From a moment's observation it was found that Keshab Chandra's mind had sunk deep unto God and his success in meditation was complete, and from that time I was attracted towards him. The rest of the congregation appeared as if they had swords and spears in their hands and their faces clearly indicated their attachment to mundane matters and their passions, pride, self-conceit had yet full hold on them."

Since then Paramhansa's attachment towards Keshab took root, but Keshab did not know him then. Many years later, in an auspicious moment, they met each other at Belghoria. It must be admitted that this meeting was Providential. At this time such a contact was for the Brahmo *Sadhaks* a necessity. While we Brahmos could not accept all the religious ideas and

ideals of the Paramhansa some of which could not secure the seal of approval of the Brahmo religion, yet there was no doubt that his exalted life in which *yoga* and *bhakti* predominated, was used by Providence for helping the development of 'Navavidhan'. Keshab Chandra who was of a supremely spiritual character, a great scholar whose fame penetrated every corner of the world, was wont to sit by Ramkrishna's side just like an humble disciple and a younger brother and listen to his utterances with all humility, reverence and loving tenderness. Keshab never entered into any controversy with him. He assimilated to the fullest extent all that was good in Paramhansa's life, and made those his own. Keshab has left us a lesson as to how to revere saints and how to assimilate saintliness from them. On many occasions before leaving for Paramhansa's place, he sat for saying his prayers at his family sanctuary and he used to dwell on *Sadhu Bhakti* (respect for the Sadhus and saints) and to prepare his mind accordingly. When we (Brahmos) used to visit Dakshineshwar, Paramhansadeb did not allow us to leave his place without partaking of some refreshments. Paramhansadeb also in his turn used to take *puris* and vegetable curries whenever he paid visit to Keshab's place, and sometimes even asked for some food when he felt hungry while there, and ate the same when supplied. He was very fond of ice. As soon as he reached Keshab's house, the latter would send someone to procure ice for him, sometimes he even sent ice to Dakshineshwar for him. Paramhansadeb was very fond of *Jilabis* (a kind of Indian sweets). One day after all sorts of sweets were served he was asked to take more sweets. He said in reply:

"I have taken my fill and no more room is left for even a particle of anything. But of course I can take a piece of *Jilabi* if it be forthcoming. There will be room for it."

One of the guests remarked:

"How is that? You say there is no room left for a particle of food, then how can there be room for a *Jilabi*?"

Ramkrishna replied:

"Just as on the occasion of a very crowded fair, the thoroughfares are packed up to the utmost, still space is made to allow the passage of a Governor's conveyance, so the sweets already in will gladly make room for a *Jilabi* as if to show respect for it."

During Keshab's last illness Ramkrishna came to see him once, and both of them talked on deep and ecstatic topics for some time. One afternoon in company with a Brahmo missionary Ramkrishna paid a visit to the Bharatavarshiya Brahma Mandir (of Calcutta). On entering the prayer hall he exclaimed:

"About three hundred worshippers worship the formless Supreme Being and utter His name here."

Saying this he fainted. He never joined in any Divine Service of our Church—how could he?—for he would fall into a trance even before the Service commenced.

On hearing that Keshab had passed away he was very much mortified and was deeply afflicted and remarked:

"Death of Keshab Chandra Sen has taken away half of my own life. Keshab was just like a huge banyan tree, and he used to give comfort and shelter to thousands

of souls, where is a second man to take his place? We are mere so many betel-nut and palm trees incapable of giving shelter to a single soul."

Sometime ago a disciple of Ramkrishna went to hang a portrait of Keshab Chandra in his room. At the very sight of it he burst into tears, with the exclamation:

"Don't keep it near me, it rends my heart to see Keshab Chandra in a portrait."

Once Keshab's mother and wife and his eldest son Karuna Chandra and second son Nirmal Chandra went to see Ramkrishna during his illness. Seeing them he burst into tears. He expressed a great concern for their welfare and made Karuna Chandra and Nirmal Chandra sit by his side, patted them and addressed them in the most affectionate terms.

Ramkrishna was in the habit of calling Keshab's mother, "Mother", and his respect for her was very deep indeed.

Ramkrishna's modesty was wonderful. He would salute a visitor before the latter could do it. He did not like that his sayings should appear in print or be published in newspapers, nor did he like that a photo of his be taken. It was only when he was absorbed in meditation that he could be successfully photographed. He did neither fall on the ground in unconscious state during his trance, nor did he prove a nuisance to the people around him by jumping and leaping. He kept quiet and calm, motionless, either seated or standing. Such a pious man is a vivid example of Divine grace. Such a life inspires hope to a drowning soul in the dark ocean of life, and guides many into the port like a light-house. We have read about great men like Chaitanya and others in books,

but we were fortunate enough to come into direct contact with Ramkrishna and to read his saintly life. Ramkrishna did not care for the present-day civilisation, he did not attend any meeting, neither did he deliver any speech, he had nothing to do with books and news-papers. How without the help of any instructions from others, depending solely on God's mercy and by *sadhan* one can attain such a pure and exalted life, has been demonstrated in his life. Just as a swan takes the cream only separating it from the water, so did Paramhansa accept only the substance out of the Hindu religion, rejecting the unsubstantial shadowy portions. ['Dharmatattwa', 1st Aswin, 1808 Shak, 16th September, 1886.]

Ramkrishna was really as simple and artless as a child. He always wanted to see with his own eyes things—of which he made examples. He once expressed his desire, just like a child, to travel by a steam-boat. On the 1st of Sraban, 1803 Shak, our Acharya Keshab Chandra, accompanied by his Brahmo friends, went to Dakshineshwar by a steam-launch and took Ramkrishna on board. Ramkrishna was eager to experience the bustling noise of the engine, now he enjoyed the same to his heart's content. One of the party asked him to have a view through a telescope from the steamer. He replied:

"My mind is now fixed in God. Do you ask me to divert it to the telescope?"

On Monday the 1st of Bhadra at 5 P.M. the body of Ramkrishna was brought from the garden of Gopal Babu of Cossipore for cremation at the Baranagore burning-ghat. About a hundred or a hundred and fifty

persons came up from Calcutta and took part in the funeral ceremony. On a new cot a gaudy bed was spread and it was decorated profusely with bunches of flowers and garlands. A new piece of yellow cloth and the flower wreaths added to the beauty of the bier. His disciples and friends made obeisance touching his feet, carried the bier on their shoulders and came out of the garden-yard shouting the name of "Hari". A party of *Vaishnavas* with their *Mridangas* and *Karatals* (drums and cymbals) preceded the funeral procession chanting *Sankirtan* hymns. Many Brahmos of the Navavidhan Church including Dr. Gopal Chandra Bose, Babus Rajmohan Bose and Kalidas Sarkar, Bhais Amritalal Bose, Troilokya Nath Sanyal and Girish Chandra Sen and others followed the procession to the burning-ghat and took part in the funeral ceremony. The emblems of the Hindu religion, such as the trident and the "Omkar" (triad), the Budha *khunti* (spud) of the Buddhists, the crescent of the Moslems and the cross of the Christians, were carried at the fore rank. Placing the bier on the cremation ground the party went round it several times, chanting *Sankirtan* hymns. Then our singing apostle Bhai Troilokya Nath Sanyal being asked by his friends sang three or four hymns suited to the occasion. Ramkrishna when alive was very fond of Troilokya's sweet songs;—at last at the funeral Bhai Troilokya had to sing, seated by the side of the lifeless body of Ramkrishna at the burning-ghat. The disciples with great reverence touched the feet of the corpse, made *pranams* and then placed it on the pyre. The eyes of Ramkrishna were still partly open, his face was slightly smiling which showed that he breathed his last while in communion with God. It

was reported that he, at about 10 P.M. on the previous day, said that his last moment was approaching, the last hard breathings *(Navi-Shwas)* had already set in. He then uttered the name of goddess Kali thrice and fell into a trance never to return to the conscious plane again, and departed to the abode of the immortals.

At sunset the corpse was consumed by the burning flames of the pyre on which sandalwood mixed with *ghee* was put. His devoted disciples set fire to the body one by one as so many sons of their spiritual-father.

We were very pleased to witness the respect and devotion shown to this God-filled man by so many educated youngmen. All thanks are due to those who had freely spent money for the saint's treatment and nursing.

Many missionaries of the Navavidhan Church observed mourning for three or four days and ate হবিষ্যান্ন *habisanna* (mourning food) only.

(C)—REV. TROILOKYA NATH SANYAL

"KESHAB CHARIT"

Second Edition, 1897, p. 150.

(Translated from Bengali)

Now it is necessary to say something about the relation between Keshab and Ramkrishna Paramhansa, a resident of Dakshineshwar. Those who have laid the foundation of a new kind of idolatry, by calling Ramkrishna our associate-in-faith and a devotee of God as God Himself and worshipping him as such, declare that Keshab was a disciple of Ramkrishna and was taught "Navavidhan" religion by him. Undoubtedly, the worshippers of Ramkrishna are bringing disgrace on his name,

mistakenly supposing in this way they are adding glory to their Master. All the real greatness of Ramkrishna was first made public to the world by Keshab. He brought him out before the public from his secluded life at Dakshineshwar. Long after this, these Ramkrishna-worshippers distorted his greatness and began to preach their blind faith according to their own liking. No doubt, the character of these people has taken a good turn, and the teaching and example of Ramkrishna have done immense good to them, but they have been guilty of spreading imaginary and false statements about those two religious men—Ramkrishna and Keshab. With the increase of outward show, pomp, ignorant admiration and worldly aspirations of these disciples of Ramkrishna, his name has got publicity in the world, but the spontaneous sweet flow of the beauty of his unsophisticated religious life is lost. Now, he is a Vedantic scholar and a god to be worshipped! Anyway, Keshab who could suck out the essence of things like a bee, took the entire cream out of Ramkrishna. They first met in the garden at Belghoria. At the very first meeting their hearts mingled together. A *sadhu* (religious man) only can bring into light the forgotten and hidden *sadhus* of their own kind. Just as Keshab introduced Jesus, Moses, Chaitanya, Buddha and Socrates to the young generation and produced religious sentiments in their minds, so it was also he who called forth the Paramhansa among the young men of Bengal. By the interchange of the religious sentiments of these two great men Brahmo Samaj has immensely progressed on the lines of *Bhakti*. We have already said, that Keshab used to assimilate the good in anybody, but he had no

tendency to imitate or copy outright. He used to give new shape to others' ideas and could improve on them tenfold. The simple and sweet childlike temper of the Paramhansa gave a gloss to Keshab's *Yoga, Bairagya, Niti, Bhakti* and pure religious sense. Paramhansa Ramkrishna was of great help in bringing out the manifestation of *Lilabilas* of *Bhakti* and expression of "Motherhood" in God which we now see in the Brahmo Samaj. Just like a child, he talked with the Blissful Mother and used to dance and sing *Kirtan* drifting down in the stream of *Harilila.* Exactly similar things we find in Keshab's later life. But the conception of knowledge (philosophy) of the two was entirely different. Ramkrishna used to see the inanimate figures of Kali, Krishna and others, in his ecstasy of love, faith and emotion. Though Keshab was a devoted *Bhakta* of the highest order yet he was a believer in the All-pervading Brahma all along. The culture of the Motherhood of God and the use of simple colloquial language in Divine Service and Prayer, which *developed* in him later —that much only was due to his connection with the other great soul. But how few, except Keshab, could assimilate the inner thoughts of Ramkrishna. Many have benefited themselves more or less by their connection with Ramkrishna, but none like Keshab. On the other hand the influence of Keshab Chandra refined and mended the religious life of Ramkrishna in many respects. Previously he did not recognise the freedom of man and his responsibilities, and the possibility of men of the world to acquire *Bhakti* and *Vairagya.* Ramkrishna's subsequent expansion of mind beyond the pale of the Hindu religion is the result of his contact

with Keshab. Besides this, Ramkrishna's conversations in vulgar language, allegorical allusions unmentionable before ladies, and errors in his personal tenets and ideas were much rectified by Keshab. In reality Ramkrishna was, like Ramprasad, an idolater of a higher type. His was a devoted life but his ideals and creed were full of errors and untenable to science. At the mention of preaching to the public he used to say, "That is for that person", *i.e.*, Keshab. Ramkrishna said, "Long ago I once visited the Adi (Brahmo) Samaj. There I saw that everyone was sitting with their eyes closed. But it seemed to me that in their minds they were up in arms. Looking at Keshab it appeared that his float had sunk deep" meaning thereby, that his mind had sunk deep into God. "Mother Herself revealed to him that Her work will be done by this man (Keshab)."

For his non-renunciation of caste distinction and idolatry Ramkrishna is now very popular amongst common folk.

However, the religious world has immensely benefited by the union of these two souls. By this union, all those lovely spiritual ideas which remained in the different branches and sub-branches of Hindu religion were introduced in the Brahmo Samaj by the believers in *Vidhan*. The religion which once appeared to be very stiff and dry, became sweet and much simple. Where there were rationalistic discourses of Vedanta there is free conversation between Mother and child. The practice of using colloquial terms in adoration and prayer came in vogue from this time. Giving a wrong interpretation to this spiritual friendship of Keshab with Ramkrishna, many people now spread many falsities, but Ramkrishna

himself knew all these to be false. It is true that Keshab was appreciative of Ramkrishna's good qualities. But whose good qualities did he not appreciate? The original seed of "Navavidhan" was sown in Keshab's soul by God Himself, which with the individual aid of the dead and living great religious minds of his native country and abroad, grew into a tree laden with flowers and fruits.

(D)—REV. MAHENDRA NATH BOSE

PROFESSOR MAX MULLER ON RAMKRISHNA AND KESHAB CHANDRA SEN—REVIEWED

I

Professor Max Muller on "REAL MAHATMAN" (1896)

Whatever the Right Hon'ble Professor Max Muller writes is respectfully read by the public, specially by the Indian public. The last (August) number of the *Nineteenth Century* contains an article from his pen on 'Real Mahatman'. In it the illustrious writer has tried to delineate the life of the late Ramkrishna Paramhansa. In the general body of the article, the Professor, with his profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Hindu theology, has tried to define what is a Mahatman according to Hindu idea. He then styles his hero as a real Mahatman. He also gives a translation of some 31 sayings of the Hindu saint. What has created some sensation in India is the post-script, specially that portion of it which has reference to the relation of the Paramhansa with the departed Keshab Chandra Sen. There are certain points in the article which need comment. The first is

the influence which the Paramhansa is said to have exercised on Keshab Chandra Sen. Professor Max Muller writes that Pratap Chandra Mazumdar told him "of the influence which the Mahatman exercised on Keshab Chandra, on himself and on many others", but he does not say what kind of influence it was which Mr. Mazumdar alluded to. Was it an influence which a master exercises on his disciple or a leader on his follower? Or was it an influence which everything true, good or beautiful, in animate or inanimate Nature exercises on great or devout minds? Was it an influence which led the Brahmo leader to the inception of the idea of the New Dispensation, of which the Hindu saint is said to be 'the real originator and teacher', or was it something different? Mr. Mazumdar is still living; a reference to him would settle the whole question. Whoever has studied the literature of the Brahmo Samaj with any amount of attention, must bear out the fact that long before the Paramhansa came in contact with Keshab Chandra, the idea of the New Dispensation was present in the latter's mind. This idea had been clearly stated in his writings and teachings long before the Hindu saint was known to him. It was not the influence of the Paramhansa that was essential for Keshab Chandra either to develop that idea or declare the New Dispensation to the public. It was some of the teachings of Jesus Christ which called forth in Keshab Chandra's mind a natural yearning after harmony in religion. In his autobiography, our Minister says:

"Maharshi Jesus said, 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' From a long time this precept was written in golden letters on my mind.

I thought I would not remain satisfied with fragmentary virtues. In God all virtues are perfect. His goodness is perfect, I do not possess that. His asceticism is commensurate with His joy, but in me if asceticism increases, joy decreases and when I become inebriated with joy, asceticism diminishes. Can it be that I shall see the God of Jesus but shall not behold the God of Buddha?......Thinkest thou that Gouranga's love shall make thee joyful, but Christ's religion of conscience shall not make thee happy? It seems that thou repellest Jesus from thy soul because thou hidest thy secret sins in it. Thou callest the name of Gouranga but seest not thy sins. It seems to me that thou art so disposed, because being self-deluded thou preferest a false exhilaration. In fragments the mind is not satisfied. Perhaps I love Gouranga so much because I am a Bengali, and I cannot love Jesus adequately on account of his being a foreigner. The Rishis of old sat on tiger-skin and wore yellow-cloth. Lest I be guilty of showing antipathy to them, I immediately went to their home. I too sat on tiger-skin and put on yellow-cloth and cried out, 'O ye Rishis, the indwellers of Asrams, for the sake of modern civilization, I have failed to honour you adequately. Come ye, even in this nineteenth century, I shall love you, I welcome you.' So saying I receive the Rishis with gladness. Whenever I accept one saint another comes to me. God has so taught the Narada of my heart that whenever I invite one saint, or receive one truth, this Narada goes around and invites all saints and a variety of truth to my house. If ever I think of inviting one of the saints or accepting only a particular truth, this Narada would not let me do that. In trying

to entertain one, I am constrained to entertain them all. It seems to me that Jesus and Moses are closely knit together. By seeing all this, I have declared the New Brahmo Dharma as the New Dispensation. *Others may retain a fragmentary religion, this cannot be done in the New Dispensation.*"

We, who were the old associates of Keshab Chandra, knew the Paramhansa more intimately than others. Before he came in contact with our Minister, he lived unnoticed by the public in the temple of Kali at Dakshineshwar. It was Keshab Chandra who brought him out from obscurity. The two noble souls loved and respected each other. We, in company with our Minister, went many a time to see the Hindu saint who in return often visited our Leader at his residence at Lily Cottage with the greatest eagerness. We have happy reminiscences of those days. It was only a few years before his death that the Paramhansa gathered some disciples around him. He was a man almost ignorant of letters. He never studied Hindu theology. But he was a child of nature; the all-absorbing passion of his life was to know God according to the light that was in him. For this, he passed through severe austerities, wept bitterly and prayed earnestly. He was remarkably sincere. Keshab Chandra admired his sincerity and earnestness and loved and respected him for the deeply spiritual turn of his life. We can get some idea of the nature of influence which Keshab Chandra Sen is said to have received from the Paramhansa from what he has written of himself in his JEEVAN-VEDA or autobiography. Keshab Chandra says: "Whoever he may be, I desire to learn at his feet. If an ascetic comes, I consider that a lakh

of rupees has come to my house. I learn much by hearing his hymns. Whoever comes to say something new, it becomes my object to acquire anyhow something from him. In my life no one who ever came to me went away without teaching me something. God has given such a strength within my mind whereby I can draw in good qualities the moment I sit in the company of saints. I can clearly perceive that whenever a saint takes leave of me, he pours into my heart his virtues, and to some extent, I become like him. I am a born disciple. I began to learn from my birth and my education is not yet finished. I shall always learn from all. From such animals as the swine and the like I learn. I shall continue to learn till I go to the next world." It is only a great mind that can learn so readily from others. Jesus learned from the fowls of the air, the lilies of the field, from the vine and the branches and from the labourers employed in a vineyard. So did other great men. The influence which Keshab Chandra is said to have received from the Paramhansa was not that which a master exercises on a disciple but it came as a simple suggestion to his master-mind which yearned after Infinite Truth. Though a Hindu of Hindus, the Paramhansa too was, to a great extent, always open to new truths. He was always ready to advance in spiritual life. By coming in contact with Keshab Chandra his mind was disabused of many errors and he learned many a precious truth. He has been described in the 'Sunday Mirror' of February 11th, 1877, in the following terms: "Ramkrishna Paramhansa, a Hindu devotee of a very unusual type, who has sympathy with our movement, now and then has interviews with our leaders.

His physical condition being very debilitated and his heart susceptible of strong religious impulses he cannot bear the pressure of feelings and often becomes unconscious and is subject to cataleptic fits." These fits though unhealthy and unnatural for a devotee are regarded by the Hindus as sure signs of sainthood. The Hindu saint after his contact with the Brahmo Leader gradually began to see that these fits were unfavourable to his religious life, and with tearful eyes he prayed many a time to get rid of them. He was a Hindu idolater and it was by coming in contact with the leader of the Brahmo Samaj that he was drawn unto the Formless Infinite Being. He was often heard to say that whenever he came in the company of the Brahmos he sank into the Ocean of Infinity. Like other Hindus he did not believe in man's free-will. He was a staunch believer in fatalism, but under Keshab's influence this belief he subsequently gave up. He, at one time, believed that man could never become religious unless he gave up this world and became a mendicant. It was under the influence of Keshab Chandra that he subsequently believed that a householder too could advance in the path of spirituality and religion. It was also through the influence of the Minister that the obscure devotee was transformed into a rather public religious teacher. Formerly, whenever anyone came to him to seek religious advice, he invariably pointed to Keshab as the fittest person to offer it. The Paramhansa's life was pure, but being a Hindu saint, the rigidness of Christian morality was foreign to him. He did not look upon prostitution and drunkenness with that disfavour as a Christian would do. He did not show that moral

abhorrence to prostitutes figuring themselves on the dramatic stage, but encouraged them considerably and thereby opened the gate of a great moral evil in the country. He allowed drinking habits in some of his disciples and did not honour the principle of teetotalism according to Western notions. We do not allude to these facts in disparagement of the Hindu saint, but only to show that these shortcomings would have died out under the (let us use the expression) "Christian" influence of Keshab Chandra had they both lived longer. The testimony which the Hindu saint bore to Keshab Chandra just after the latter's death clearly explained his relation with our Minister. He, in his usual way, most feelingly said, "I am as a large piece of wood carried in loneliness by a strong current towards the Great Ocean, but my Keshab was a mighty steam-boat which not only proceeded by itself but carried thousands of pilgrims on it to the Great Ocean." By another metaphor he expressed the same sentiment and said that "he was as a palm tree growing with an uplifted head, but Keshab was like the banyan tree which not only raised its head heavenward but gave shelter to thousands of men and women. He too, many a time, repaired to that shady tree and danced and sang the Mother's name."

We have shown already that the influence which the Paramhansa is said to have exercised on Keshab Chandra was not that which a master exercises on his disciples, nor was it such as led him to the inception of the idea of the New Dispensation which has been described by the illustrious writer as the last phase of his religious career. The spiritual turn of the Paramhansa's mind,

his earnestness and sincerity, were very much suggestive to the Minister's mind which was ever ready to learn from all objects—animate or inanimate. We now intend to notice certain portion of Professor Max Muller's article which is calculated to misrepresent Keshab Chandra Sen. "It was," says the illustrious writer, "a surprise to many of Keshab Chandra's friends and admirers to observe the sudden change of the sober reformer into the mystic and ecstatic saint that took place towards the end of his life. But although this later development of the New Dispensation, and more particularly the doctrine of the Motherhood of God, may have alienated many of Keshab Chandra Sen's European friends, it seems to have considerably increased his popularity with Hindu society. At all events, we are now enabled to understand the hidden influence which caused so sudden a a change, and produced so marked a deviation in the career of the famous founder of the Brahmo Samaj, which has sometimes been ascribed as the breakdown of an over-excited brain." Professor Max Muller is generally credited with having studied the history of the Brahmo Samaj and intimately known his friend Keshab Chandra Sen ; but we are disappointed when we find how superficial his knowledge has been in those matters. The statement that there has been "a sudden change of the sober reformer into the mystic and ecstatic saint" is absolutely groundless. Whoever knows anything about Keshab Chandra's life, must admit that he was a sober reformer to the end of his life and career. His interest and zeal in social, moral and religious reforms never ceased or abated even in his last moments. He evinced extraordinary zeal in the cause of female education,

temperance and other social reforms to the end of his life. The 'Liberal' and the 'New Dispensation', which were started by him in 1882, advocated political and other reforms with the greatest earnestness, whereas he zealously carried on female reform through the 'Arya Nari Samaj' and the 'Victoria College' for Indian ladies even to his last days. As for religious reform he was never so earnest as towards the closing days of his career. The great missionary expedition was undertaken and he himself was at the head of the expedition party; he travelled far and wide in the country with the name of the One True God and never was he so much successful in a missionary enterprise as at that time. The missionaries of our Church were called Apostles, and indeed it was with an apostolic zeal that our faith was proclaimed from one end of the country to the other towards the closing days of our Minister's life. It was therefore the greatest misrepresentation of facts to say that "the sober reformer was changed into a mystic and ecstatic saint." Our disappointment has been the greatest to find that the above statement was made by one who is believed to have not only known Keshab Chandra intimately but has made the religion of India his special study, and has laboured so much for the cause of comparative religions. Keshab Chandra Sen was not a mystic and ecstatic saint towards the end of his life as he is described to have been. The best guarantee and the testimony that the *yoga* he practised and taught was not mysticism or ecstasy, was his essay on 'Yoga: Objective and Subjective' which was published in the 'New York Independent' in 1883 and was embodied in the form of a book during his last days. This little

book contains a thorough exposition of *Yoga* which he practised, and the principles enunciated therein are in perfect accord with the teachings of science. The NEW SAMHITA or the Sacred Laws of the Aryans of the New Dispensation which was his last production is admired by the whole world. It embraces highest principles of individual, domestic and social life, and we challenge anybody to prove that there is the least trace of mysticism or ecstasy in it. Keshab Chandra's last lecture delivered in the Town Hall on "Asia's Message to Europe" is admitted by many a Westerner as a wonderful production. Can Professor Max Muller point out mysticism or ecstasy in it? For the learned Professor to call his friend Keshab Chandra a mystic and ecstatic saint is an act of greatest uncharitableness or an instance of *utter ignorance of fact*. Even a superficial observer has seen that the great object of his life was to unite the East and the West, not merely in outward matters but also in the deep religious spirit peculiar to both. He defines the new faith of which he was the chief Apostle in the following words: "It is the harmony of reason and faith, of inspiration and science, of devotion and duty. It is an explanation of pantheism and polytheism. It is an explanation of the philosophy of Hindu Pantheon with its millions of divinities. It is the religion of pure science. It is a protest against every form of deception, superstition, lying and imposture. It is Asia's protest against Europe's agnosticism. It is Europe's protest against Asia's mysticism. It is the worship of harmony. It is the equilibrium of forces in the spirit-world. It is the science of religion. It is the reconciliation of apparent contradictions. It is the

Westminster Abbey where the enmities of fifty generations lie buried and forgotten."*

In explaining the European side of the New Dispensation, he says: "The New Dispensation is thoroughly scientific. It hates whatsoever is unscientific. It has an abhorrence of delusions and myths. It is empirical and relies upon observation and experiment. It has no hypothesis, and takes nothing on trust. It stands the severest logical tests, and is made up of demonstrable truths. It is supported by reasoning, inductive and deductive. It harmonizes with the latest discoveries of science and keeps pace with the progress of philosophy and exact science. It touches not, and cautiously avoids supernaturalism, and the whole domain of miracles and prophecies. Dreams, visions, trance, illumination, spirit-rapping, reveries, it discountenances. It has no faith in a visible or audible divinity or in spirits that speak or are spoken to.......It is prepared to reject every doctrine which Science may oppose or new discoveries may explode.......It is the service of man in varied fields of philanthropic usefulness. It is the religion of study, researches, criticism, thought and dialectics. It is never-ceasing godly work."†

Regarding the Asiatic side he writes: "The New Dispensation is profoundly emotional. It hates dryness. It is the religion of tender love and sweet affection. Faith without love, work without love, it doth not countenance. It affords the fullest culture to all the higher emotions and impulses of the heart. Its wisdom is the loving

* The New Dispensation, Vol. I, p. 300; Vol. II, p 72.

† The New Dispensation, Vol. I, p. 311.

knowledge of God, its work is the loving service fo God. It possesses a heart overflowing with the milk of love and eyes glistening with tears of devotion. It makes all things sweet by its touch......... The New Dispensation is transcendentally spiritual. Its eyes are naturally turned inward and they see vividly the spirit-world within. It prefers the soul-kingdom to the kingdom of the senses. It abhors materialism. It always magnifies the spirit, and spiritualizes everything it touches. It sees with the spirit-eye and hears with the spirit-ear. It drinks inspiration. It builds the eternal city, the kingdom of heaven within, and dwells therein all the spare hours of the day." *

Keshab Chandra fully realized that perfect system of religion of harmony which the learned Professor tried to apprehend, however faintly, with his intellect and imperfectly enunciated in his writings on Comparative Religion. The high spiritual phase peculiar to the Hindus shall for some time to come remain as an unintelligible enigma to the Western mind, however highly cultivated it may be. But as an Occidental it is but natural for Professor Max Muller to misunderstand the Brahmo Leader when the Eastern phase of spirituality was exhibited in his character. The blunder which the learned Professor has committed in calling Keshab Chandra the Founder of the Brahmo Samaj is unaccountable; for it is well known that the honour of founding the Brahmo Samaj does not belong to him but to Raja Ram Mohan Roy. We have already shown that it was not the influence either hidden or expressed of the

* The New Dispensation. Vol. I, pp. 316-317.

Paramhansa that had caused the sudden change in Keshab Chandra's character as has been insinuated, nor has there been a deviation in his career. We do not wonder that the so-called deviation in Keshab's character would have been ascribed to the breakdown of an over-excited brain when we find that even Jesus Christ who had been so much admired for his Sermon on the Mount and other earlier teachings, was seriously believed to have died an idiot by such a savant as M. Renan on account of his transcendentally spiritual teachings about the Kingdom of God and his relation with humanity.

II

Professor Max Muller on 'Ramkrishna and his Life and Sayings'

We have carefully gone through Professor Max Muller's interesting work entitled "Ramkrishna: His Life and Teachings." As a literary product we cannot sufficiently admire it. It is worthy of the reputation of the great author who, for his appreciation of Hindu religious thought and sympathy for the Indians, has added another cause of gratitude to the many others for which our countrymen feel already indebted to him. We must also confess that he tried to be impartial in the treatment of his subject. The portion dealing with the biography proper of Ramkrishna has not been penned by him but written by our friend Narendra Nath Dutt who has now assumed the name of Vivekananda. The work has been made of special interest by explaining the life of the Hindu saint in the light of Hindu

philosophy and illustrating it by short biographies of other Hindu saints of the modern age, all written by the author. We cannot, therefore, make the renowned author responsible for all the facts connected with the life of Saint Ramkrishna as well as for the errors of commission and omission contained in the work. The tone of the author is rather apologetic; he has tried to defend and support his contributor, without questioning anything which the latter has written. This, we believe, has been done in a spirit of superabundant charity which, as we are told, takes for granted all things without questioning. We are indeed thankful to him for the following words: "I can only say that Keshab Chandra Sen's memory is quite safe in my hands, perhaps safer than in those of his relatives. I stood up for him when his nearest friends forsook him and turned against him." But we do not know what does he mean by "jealousy" and "childish misunderstanding of Keshab's self-constituted advocates", as he has written somewhere in his work, nor do we know whom does he mean by these "self-constituted advocates". We know there are many of Keshab Chandra's friends and admirers who abominate what is being called "shop jealousy", but they are jealous about the relative positions of Keshab Chandra and Ramkrishna, the last of whom they honour as a great Hindu saint and would feel great repugnance to any misrepresentation of his life and doing. They would be greatly aggrieved if anyone of these great saints—Keshab or Ramkrishna—is depreciated or held in undue veneration. The renowned author, perhaps, does not know how anxious are the disciples of Ramkrishna, including Vivekananda who supplied him the biography of his

master, to deify their Guru within so short a time. It is singularly strange how they have invented so many supernatural and miraculous narratives and connected them with the life of their master. There is a life of Paramhansa in Bengali by one of his devoted disciples who has connected, with the birth of his Guru, stories somewhat similar to those which are recorded in some of the Apocryphal Gospels about the birth of Jesus. The story of the supernatural birth of Ramkrishna as coming out of the thigh of his mother is not unheard of in Bengal. Some of these men have propagated other supernatural stories, such as the saint coming back after his death and smoking *chillums* in some *maths* or temples consecrated to him. The evil effect of the vagaries, specially in India, cannot be overstated, and it has been our greatest anxiety to see that the very noble and exalted life of the Hindu saint is presented in the light of stern facts, depreciating nothing, exaggerating nothing. Even the author's contributor is not free from such vagaries as the learned Professor himself has admitted. It has been the great object of these misguided disciples to describe their master as God or as an incarnation of God, a tendency which their master always denounced as blasphemous. We know when in his last days, one of his disciples called him Bhagwan (God), he rebuked him vehemently saying, "Be off, thou brother-in-law (a term which in India is considered very much abusive and which was frequently indulged in by the saint), had I been God, I would not have to die so miserable a death." It cannot be denied that it has been the interest of Vivekananda to describe his Guru as the Master and enlightener of all, himself owing to none for his

enlightenment or guidance. The story of the woman from whom, according to the contributor, the Paramhansa received enlightenment, has been explained by the statement that the woman was no human being but the goddess herself. The venerable author has explained away this statement as the result of Vedantic belief, but from whatever source it might have arisen, error is error and should be denounced as such. The most curious portion of the narrative is the description of Keshab Chandra Sen's relation with the Paramhansa. After admitting the fact that it was Keshab Chandra who brought out Ramkrishna from oblivion, Vivekananda, as he is now called, refers to the first interview of Ramkrishna with Keshab Chandra in 1866 (sic). He then goes on to say without least warrant that "Keshab Chandra sat for hours at the feet of Ramkrishna and listened with rapture to his wonderful sayings."—"From time to time Ramkrishna was lost in *Samadhi* and Keshab would gently touch his feet that he might be purified."—"He questioned him on some points of religion to clear away his doubts."—"Keshab's whole life was changed till a few years later, he proclaimed the New Dispensation which was nothing but a partial representation of the truths which Ramkrishna had taught for a long time." *Nothing could be more insinuating, more incorrect, misleading and, we should say, more false than some of the above sentiments.* We knew the Paramhansa long before any of his disciples had known him or even before Vivekananda was a Brahmo *neophyte* previous to his having any knowledge of the Hindu saint. We were present at meetings when Paramhansa, being attracted by the fame of Keshab Chandra, came to visit

him at the Belghoria garden in 1875 (not 1866), and we very well remember the impression produced in every one of us on those occasions. Neither Vivekananda nor any one of those who many years after became Paramhansa's disciples had been present at the meeting nor had they any idea of the impression produced on us all at the time. What we saw there was not the instruction of a *Guru* to his *Shishya* nor of a teacher to his disciple, but it was, as we call it, a good *Satprasanga* or religious conversation of devotees. In it Keshab said and the Paramhansa listened, and *vice versa*. The scene has been characteristically described by the Hindu saint as the meetings of *ganja* (hemp) smokers whose enjoyment is enhanced by the exchange of the intoxicating *chillum* among the inebriated smokers. We had almost invariably been with Keshab Chandra whenever he had any interview with the Paramhansa. Keshab Chandra, accompanied by some Brahmos and sometimes by Brahmo ladies too, among whom were his mother and wife, now and then went to see the Paramhansa at Dakshineshwar. These were the meetings of cognate spirits and we very well remember the veneration with which the latter received the former and entertained him with respect. Many a time the Paramhansa used to come to Lily Cottage, sometimes on invitation and sometimes by himself, drawn by a spiritual tie. We do not remember Vivekananda or any of the disciples of the Paramhansa, who now try to extol him so unduly and describe him as Keshab's Guru, was present at any of those meetings. Vivekananda has no personal authority to write on these matters. His testimony is simply hearsay. We, who were personally present at those meetings, testify that it

was not the meeting of a master and a disciple. Very few now can imagine the ebullition of religious feelings which took place at those times. It is shop-jealousy now to describe the one to be the disciple of the other. The fact is that the Paramhansa, Keshab Chandra and everybody present were edified with all that was said and heard. Neither Vivekananda nor Professor Max Muller has said anything about the Paramhansa's veneration for Keshab Chandra whose very name would oftentimes produce *samadhi* in the Paramhansa's mind, and we have seen, on many an occasion, the Paramhansa entered into the house of Keshab Chandra in an unconscious state of *samadhi* and when the *samadhi* was almost over, his indistinct utterances clearly implied that Keshab's house was a place of holy pilgrimage unto him and the very thought of his entering into that holy place was sufficient to upset his mind. Latterly Keshab Chandra could not go to Dakshineshwar as he used to do before; but the Paramhansa used to come to him, all on a sudden at times, and no sooner he entered the threshold than he fell into a state of *samadhi*. We have heard it on more than one occasion that he (the Paramhansa) addressing Keshab Chandra remarked in his own peculiar way: "A curious man and a thief he was; as Krishna stole the heart of the Gopinis (milkmaids) so did Keshab, his. He at first visited him at his residence but when he stole away his (Paramhansa's) heart, he sat quietly at home and would not mind visiting him much. He (the Paramhansa) like the Gopinis could not stay away now without visiting him but under a mysterious charm for the lover, he ran to his lover's house." We have so many reminiscences about mutual love and intimacy of

the Paramhansa and Keshab Chandra that the short space at our command would be quite insufficient for their reproduction. We do not know at whose authority Vivekananda wrote that when the Paramhansa was in a state of *samadhi,* Keshab Chandra "took the dust of his feet to be purified." We were always with Keshab Chandra and we, from personal authority, do testify that our friend's statement is anything but true. As for the statement that Keshab Chandra's New Dispensation was nothing but the partial representation of truths which Ramkrishna had taught him, we can only say that it is grossly incorrect and ridiculously absurd. Both Keshab Chandra and the Paramhansa were each other's spiritual friends; they both derived spiritual help from each other. But for all this it cannot be said that Keshab was a *shishya* of the Paramhansa or that the Paramhansa was Keshab's disciple. Whatever might be the esoteric meaning of the terms disciple and master, *shishya* and *guru,* to which Professor Max Muller refers, we ordinary people, specially in India, understand them to mean what was John, James or Paul to Christ, Guru Angad to Guru Nanak or our friend Narendra Nath to the Paramhansa. To say that Keshab Chandra was the disciple of the Paramhansa in any sense whatever, is incorrect and misleading and we are disappointed to find that, in spite of the facts set forth in our organ over and over again, an impartial observer like Professor Max Muller should insist upon the misstatement that he had at one time made.

The public are already aware how anxious the disciples of the Paramhansa are to prove that he was an incarnation of God and therefore Guru and Master of

all men, himself owing to no human being for instruction or enlightenment. We shall try to show by further reminiscences the tender relation of the two great saints. It was one fine morning of 1875, when the *Sadhanasram* was first started at the Belghoria garden and we with Keshab Chandra lived in it for religious culture, the Paramhansa, accompanied by his nephew Hriday, came to see our Minister at the Asram. At first we took him to be a mad man ; but afterwards we all gathered round him and when he began to speak, we were very much impressed with his utterances which were of a highly spiritual character. Keshab Chandra who honoured every man who discoursed on religious subjects with earnestness and faith, listened with respect to all what the Paramhansa said. The Paramhansa also heard what Keshab Chandra and others said. Among many interesting subjects which the Paramhansa dwelt upon, was his allusion to the incident of his first contact with our Minister. He said that one evening he went to the Adi Brahmo Samaj to see how Divine Services were conducted there. He said, in his peculiar fashion, that on taking a survey of the congregation, he discovered from the very attitude of the worshippers that the inner man in every one of the worshippers took up, as it were, arms to keep off God from entering into his heart, only the soul of one young man (Keshab) sank deep as sinks the angler's feather when a big fish catches the hook. This fair-looking young man, he was afterwards told, was Keshab Chandra. Since that time, he said, he had great regard for our Minister and he earnestly desired to see him. He then heard that in the neighbourhood of Belghoria, Keshab Chandra, who was regarded as a

great Sadhu, was living in an adjacent garden house and he had, he said, come to see him. The meeting was extremely interesting. We have clearly seen how at that meeting the spark of Divine Presence came out by the friction of human souls through religious conversation. The impression created on the mind of everybody present was very sacred. From that time, as we said, the two saints now and then visited each other at their respective residences. They were cognate spirits—each other's spiritual friends, each one of them received spiritual help from the other. Ramkrishna was an illiterate man, he could perhaps scarcely sign his name in any language, but he was a religious genius brought up entirely in the school of Hinduism. He had been an idolater to his backbone. He had firm faith in all the stories of Hindu mythology and believed that there was a supernatural power in idols. We remember very well when Keshab Chandra was ill, the Paramhansa took the vow of offering to the goddess Kali at her shrine at Bagbazar, which is believed by the Hindus to be a very living one, sugar and green cocoanut, if Keshab would do better, and he actually made those offerings on his way home. But, in spite of his belief in idolatry, there was a large residue of God-consciousness in him. He was to all intents and purposes a Hindu, and we should say, one of the best fruits of Hinduism. In his faith there was a mysterious admixture of error and truth, superstition and true faith, it was by his contact with Keshab Chandra that he learnt, more than ever, to know the Formless Being who is Infinite and Eternal. We have often heard the Paramhansa say that whenever he associated with these Brahmagyanis (Brahmos) he fell into the Infinite Sea

of the Absolute and Eternal. He was lost in Infinity. These men drew him away from his Mother Kali. He often likened the Infinite and the Eternal to the boundless ocean and Kali, Krishna and other Hindu gods to frozen water of that ocean. The frozen water, he said, was good to enjoy but there was a choking sensation in being lost in Infinity. But, he said, since he mixed with these Brahmos, he could hold communion with the Infinite and Eternal more frequently and more easily than before. Professor Max Muller writes: "both in Keshab Chandra's and in Ramkrishna's utterances is an admixture of European ideas. Neither the one nor the other would have spoken as they did before the English Government began its educational work in India." It is rather disappointing to find how superficial is Max Muller's estimate of the two saints and how he placed both Ramkrishna and Keshab Chandra in the same class in this respect. The latter was a child and the best fruit of English education. His very backbone was Western thought and Western culture. But Ramkrishna was, as we have observed, the best fruit of Hinduism. He was a Hindu to his backbone and, like some uncultured village Hindus, he was altogether devoid of Western light and culture; but by his contact with Keshab Chandra, glimpses of European ideas entered into his mind. The idea of propagation and the desire of bringing others to his faith by public teaching, which characterised him during the latter part of his life, owed their origin to Keshab Chandra's influence. He often expressed a strong desire to see our Minister delivering public speeches before large audiences at the Town Hall. He came to the Brahma Mandir to see how Keshab Chandra preached

before large congregation. The Paramhansa often admired him for his public preaching which he afterwards imitated. He knew almost nothing about Jesus Christ and often listened to Keshab Chandra when he spoke of the Sonship of Christ and his spirit of forgiveness and love as well as his holy life. We remember one evening when at the Belghoria garden, the conversation turned upon the life of Christ, and Keshab Chandra was descanting on the sacred theme, the Paramhansa fell into a fit of *Samadhi* and cried out as if he saw a great vision—"There, there", and then he muttered something which we could not understand; afterwards he fell insensible under a cataleptic fit, known in this country as *Samadhi*. He often heard from Keshab Chandra the undesirableness of becoming unconscious in *Samadhi*. Real union with God, he was often reminded, was consciousness in union. The Paramhansa also admitted that these cataleptic fits proceeded from his weakness and often prayed to his Mother to save him from them. He often observed, "Oh, how these men enjoyed God retaining their consciousness." By Keshab Chandra's influence he tried to overcome this weakness. It has been said without the least particle of truth that Keshab Chandra learned from the Paramhansa the ideas of the New Dispensation. The Paramhansa regarded Kali and Krishna as one. We very well remember with what enthusiasm, he often chanted his pet hymn which ran— "O Mother, stand Thou before me leaving off Thy sword and taking up Thy flute", meaning thereby the transformed appearance of Kali into Krishna both of whom he regarded as manifestations of the same God. He knew nothing of the more comprehensive harmony of all

religions which he often heard from Keshab Chandra. He was an illiterate man and had not studied the principal characteristics of the different religions of the world. We were witnesses of constant visits of the Paramhansa to Keshab Chandra at his own house. One day when the latter was ill the present writer, who was his constant attendant in his last days, came out with him from the bed-room to the drawing-room where the Paramhansa, with a few others, were seated. On seeing Keshab Chandra the Paramhansa fell in a fit of *Samadhi* and in his own peculiar mood cried out most pathetically,—"You are a drop of that Infinite Ocean." Under the shadow of Keshab, he (the Paramhansa) danced and sang God's name with rapture. He then said that every man in this world is a bird of God ; of these, some, like bad birds of the wilderness, only shriek and cry and annoy people, while others sing the name of God and enchant men's minds. Keshab Chandra was one of such birds. When the intelligence of Keshab Chandra's death reached the Paramhansa, he became insensible and to an interviewer he subsequently said that for a time he thought that he himself was dead and gone, as Keshab and he were one. He laid down on the ground for a time and then touching his own body with his hands, he said to himself, "Here I am, I am not dead, but alas! Keshab is no more." He then went on to describe the difference between himself and Keshab by observing, "I am only a log of wood running with the current of the river towards the Great Ocean but Keshab was a steamer which not only ran itself to that Ocean but carried on its board thousands of men and women." Then he compared himself to a palm tree which lifted up its head somehow and Keshab

to a banyan tree which not only raised its head towards heaven but gave shadow to many others who danced and sang the name of God under its cool shade and he himself was one of those men.

We have already shown the agreement or kinship between Ramkrishna and Keshab Chandra but there was also a wide gulf between them—a difference which could not be reconciled—the two were exactly at the antipodes of each other, so much so that it would be most absurd to call the one a disciple or *chela* of the other. The most striking point of difference was their respective attitudes to wealth and women or *kamini-kanchan* as was characteristically called by the Paramhansa. The Paramhansa, who was only a Hindu devotee and could not rise above Hindu ideas and sentiments of religion, commenced his spiritual life by avoiding wealth and woman. He regarded them as enemies to the progress of the spiritually-minded people. So much repulsion and horror he had for them that the mere thought of them would upset him. We knew that he had an ardent admirer in the person of a wealthy man named Shambhu Chunder Mallik who owned a garden house near the Dakshineshwar Kali's temple where he resided. Shambhu Babu used to invite Ramkrishna to his garden house now and then. The former, one day, after being immensely edified by conversation with the Paramhansa, as a mark of admiration, brought a piece of good Kashmere shawl and wrapped it round his body. The Paramhansa described to us his experience at the time in the following manner: He thought that the shawl over him acted as a charm and brought about complete revolution in him. He lost, as it were, all virtue and he was degraded as a worldly man.

Immediately he lost his senses and began to scream and cry aloud as one subjected to a forced suffocation or strangulation. He came to his senses only when the shawl was removed. At another time, he said that Shambhu Babu had presented him three or four best mangoes which he put into his cloth. The genuine Hindu ascetic knew that he had nothing in this world which he could call his own; the possession of these mangoes upset his brain and immediately he lost his senses and such a confusion of mind overtook him that he could not find out where the door of the room was, that he might escape from the dangerous place. At last he threw off the mangoes from his cloth; the Paramhansa himself told us that instantly the equilibrium of his mind was restored. He had such an abhorrence for coins that the mere contact of a coin with his body would make it stiff as a piece of wood. We have many other reminiscences to prove what horror he had for wealth and woman but we think these would suffice. He often compared wealth to crow-dung or *kak-bistha*. As for woman he considered her to be the greatest stumbling block in the path of a godly man. He certainly spoke of her as the incarnation of the Divine Mother, but in all practical purposes, he could not dissociate grossest carnality from women in his mind. Bhai Pratap Chandra in a letter to Professor Max Muller has complained of ill-treatment of Paramhansa to his wife. The complaint may not be true but as a Hindu ascetic, his adherence to Hindu idea of asceticism compelled him to neglect, yea forsake, her and even entertain a horror for his wife, the mere contact with whom, he thought, would upset his spiritual life and produce grossest carnality in him.

We have already related how in a steamer party, he avoided coming near a Christian lady on board the same steamer. Anyone who knew him, knew also the hatred and the horror he had for woman and wealth. But what a contrast with Keshab Chandra's teachings and practices of life which were in accord with, and even ahead of, the most enlightened ideas and loftiest aspirations of the age. Christianity teaches that "it is easier for the camel to pass through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The New Dispensation which is the fulfilment of the older dispensations, proclaims that rich men have as much right to enter into the kingdom of heaven as poor men. The kingdom of heaven is no monopoly of any particular people. The way to heaven is as straight from the rich man's palace as from the poor man's cottage. Read his lectures, sermons, and prayers and you will find what gospel of hope and love there is for the rich and the poor alike. The rich and the poor have each his peculiar advantages and disadvantages but the grace of God overcomes the latter and enhances the former for the good of those who believe in Him. The rich man's heap of wealth is as much a stepping stone to lift him to the kingdom of heaven as the helplessness of the poor. Each one's condition of life is a guardian angel unto him. How refreshing is his sermon in the Brahma Mandir in which he describes two kinds of rupees the one, a rupee of glass through which the face of God and the kingdom of heaven are visible and the other the opaque rupee which obstructs our view of heaven. The Teaching of Christianity is "to render unto Cæzar that which is Cæzar's and unto God that which is God's."

This doctrine, no doubt, has brought about a great revolution in politics. It has also a tendency to draw a line of demarcation between God and Cæzar. But Keshab Chandra obliterated the distinction. All things, he taught, whether it be riches, honour, principalities, power—political, social, domestic or scientific—are God's. God, according to his religion, is not divorced from any department of life. He discerned an all-pervading Divinity in all departments. of life. He designated the One Without The Second by many names. He saw God in his household affairs and called Him by the national name of 'Lakshmi'. We remember very well how he consecrated his storehouse at Lily Cottage and worshipped the invisible God Lakshmi in it with deep devotion. In his dining room which he regarded as sacred, he saw the face of the Divine Mother 'Annapurna', Giver of rice. The New Eucharist he instituted was thus not the Eucharist of old. His bath-room was also sacred, for on its wall he saw the face of the Divine Mother. He regarded his daily ablution as holy baptism. He knew no social institution, no amusement or recreation in which God was not present. He acted in the presence of God on the theatrical stage which he regarded holy as the house of God. The *Nat-Mandir* (stage) he said was holy as the *Deva-Mandir* (tabernacle of God). He discerned God's presence in both and danced and sang on the stage before the Lord. In the sacrament of marriage or in the birth of a child—in all social and domestic institutions he perceived the presence of God. He regarded it an imperfect religion—a religion of carnality, in which the son, the wife, the daughter, the daughter-in-law, the son-in-law were not glorified in God.

The "New Samhita" which is nothing but the outward expression of his inner life, has thus been designated as the new law for the new race of Aryans. Loyalty to the Sovereign is one of the creeds of his religion. The meaning of this creed is deeper than many seem to understand it. With him there was no rendering unto Cæzar what was Cæzar's but everything, he knew, was of God. Whether it was Cæzar,—his power or principality, he knew, was not his but God's and the tribute money, which he described as sacred and transparent (for through it the face of God was visible) was also God's; and whether when he paid the tribute money to the Sovereign, saw his person and that of his agents or gave allegiance to them, he magnified not man but his God Who pervades everything and subordinates everything under Him. With him politics was not divorced from religion. Whatever service he did was a pleasant duty to his God. His politics was religion and his relation with the State, his Sovereign and the several government officials was also religious. It was for this reason that his loyalty was above even the liability to least reproach. It was for this reason that the highest officials of the State regarded him as the very model of loyalty. Keshab Chandra thus proclaimed a new politics, a new sociology and a new domestic economy and laid their foundation on no other basis than the rock of the doctrine of Divine immanence in all things; nevertheless he was an ascetic, Yogi and Bhakta in the highest sense of the terms. He was thus far ahead of the age and his religion was so peculiar that he could never be called a disciple or *chela* of this man or that man, of this Sadhu or of that Sadhu.

We would close the subject by tracing the source

from which Keshab Chandra and the Paramhansa derived their religious ideas and spiritual life. The Paramhansa was a Hindu Sadhu and a recluse. He lived and moved in the groove of Hinduism, but we fully believe that his life was from the Spirit of God Who gave him light and leading but nevertheless he was confined within the definite limit of Hinduism. It was culture which raised him to the spiritual eminence. But Keshab Chandra's idea was universal. He followed Christ's principle of "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfeet." It was the Holy Spirit of God which made him ever restless and ever progressive. His ideas and experiences of life gave shape to the New Dispensation—a new religion—new faith and new practicai life. Yes, every object he came across, every minstrel he saw at his door, every ascetic he visited, every Paramhansa, Missionary or Moulavee he met was made to pass before the winnowing fan of his wonderful mind, and he separated the unreal and erroneous in their life and teachings from the real and true that was in them; the latter sank deep into his life, became a part and parcel of it and contributed to the growth of his inner man which was the New Dispensation, and the former he rejected. He was as the bee which culled honey from all flowers—wild or cultivated.

(E)—Mr. UPENDRA KRISHNA GUPTA

MAX MULLER ON RAMKRISHNA AND KESHAB

[Keshab Chandra Sen passed away in January 1884. He was followed two years and a half later by Paramhansa Ramkrishna. In 1893, after the Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, the question was raised in what way the former was influenced

by the latter. Statements were made in the *Indian Mirror* which seemed to Rev. Promotho Lall Sen to be not warranted by facts, and these were pointed out by him to the editor of the same. He was one of the several young men who had their introduction to Ramkrishna through Keshab Chandra, Mr. Upendra Krishna Gupta was another. Known among his friends for his scrupulous fidelity to facts in the relation of events, it was thought he would have been the fittest person to write an unvarnished history of the Brahmo Samaj. When sometime in 1896 Professor Max Muller wrote in *The Nineteenth Century* on Ramkrishna under the caption: *A Real Mahatman*—the same question was started again and statements were made which were questioned in an article which appeared in the November number of the *Interpreter and the Young Man* of the same year. As the writer's name did not appear with it, when it was reprinted in the *Navavidhan*, August 1927, it was wrongly attributed to "P. L. Sen" (Rev. Promotho Lall Sen). In view of the fact that, though a new interest had been awakened in the subject in European and American Magazines, the old mis-statements were being repeated, it was thought necessary to publish Mr. Upendra Krishna Gupta's article in the form of a separate pamphlet in 1930. It is reproduced here.]

It is sad to reflect how much of fiction finds place in the composition of what men call history. The story of Sir Walter Raleigh's singular discomfiture at the various conflicting testimonies regarding the incidents of a common street fight, while engaged in writing a History of the World, has as pointed a moral as any of old Æsop's Fables. Maybe, our countrymen in ancient times refrained from writing any history, professedly called so, more from a sense of the futility of an attempt to get hold of real facts than from anything else. And, when Professor Max Muller sat down to write an article for the *Nineteenth Century* on Paramhansa Ramkrishna, mightily impressed as the erudite Anglo-German *savant* had always been with the wisdom of Ancient India, *he*

may have had in view, in the fashion of our forefathers, *not so much the writing of plain unvarnished history as to "point a moral and adorn a tale".* For, how otherwise to account for the fact, that apart from the learned discussions on Vedantism, Adwaitism and Vishishtadwaitism contained in the first portion of the article in question, the Professor, who had based all but the whole of the personal narration of his hero on a beautiful monograph which appeared about twenty years ago, did not think fit, before rushing to print, to communicate with the writer of that same monograph who really happened to be an old friend of his?

We are here concerned with only that portion of the article which was intended to throw a new and most unexpected light on the later career of Keshab Chandra Sen. Now, with regard to this portion, we must say, that notwithstanding our great respect and veneration for the Professor, one would suspect there had been some occult influence at work with him in connection with the 'Real Mahatman', and such influence was too much for him. However that might be, people who had an intimate personal knowledge of both the Hindu saint and the Leader of the Church of the New Dispensation, and the warm friendship that existed between the two great men, as well as their diverse careers, will at once perceive, that *the old Pandit has been thoroughly misled*.

Professor Max Muller speaks of the earlier and the later life of Keshab Chandra Sen, as if there must have been some mysterious missing link between the two, and now at last he has got hold of the same. But he has been woefully mistaken. *The whole life of Keshab Chandra Sen was symmetrical to a degree. There was*

development, there was progress: there was achievement and fruition.

More than any other Indian in this century he had an ample share of such success and unsuccess, admiration and vilification, friendship and enmity, hero-worship and persecution; and all this had the effect of marvellously broadening his sympathy and his vision, sweetening his utterances and his devotions, maturing his faith and experiences and deepening and exalting his high spiritual culture. Such a life, short as it was and yet charged with the potency of ages, had manifold ways of working itself out and necessarily struck out various phases of the self-same life of the spirit. *But there was no sudden breaking off, no parting of the ways, as Professor Max Muller would make out.*

Now it was of course no wonder that a man of the native simplicity and the great spiritual calibre of the revered Paramhansa should have some influence on the highly susceptible and all-absorbing nature of Keshab Chandra Sen. It would, however, be simply puerile to speak of our Minister as if the Paramhansa's influence had the effect of diverting his whole life and devotion, philosophy and reflection to an altogether new channel. Keshab Chandra Sen had as marked an individuality as ever man had. Yet this singular soul had, as he himself happily expressed, something of the nature of a blotting paper. Whatever goodness and godliness approached him, he had a strange power of assimilating the same in his own life-blood and did not and could not rest satisfied until it had borne fruits. Great characters from history and great characters from life both had equal attractions for him. The Divine character of

the Son of God was the first influence on his life from outside. And then came Chaitanya. These were the twin-forces of wonderful efficacy alike with the Brahmo leader born of a pious Vaishnava family, and the Brahmo Samaj in general. The ideal of sonship and then the ideal of *Bhakta* blended itself in his soul and the two together produced a unique development in religious history. Afterwards came Buddha and other Masters and brought their quota to the Church of the New Dispensation.

Of living characters, the first man to exert any considerable influence was, of course, Debendra Nath Tagore; in later life, came the Paramhansa, the *Pahari* Baba of Ghazipur (who is still alive) and others. Never for a moment, however, could the influence of the Paramhansa or even of the *Pradhan Acharya* or indeed of any living man be so great as that of Jesus and Chaitanya. It was not to be supposed, moreover, that only prophets and saints influenced the life of Keshab Chandra Sen. The humblest man or woman, the humblest creature on earth had suggestions and instructions for him which in the singular crucible of his ardent spirit were transformed and utilized. These are facts well known to all who were eye-witnesses to the glorious career of Keshab Chandra Sen but they are worth repetition from our feeble pen when a man like the Professor is found to be still labouring under such a mistaken conception of our Minister's life.

We would now show that notwithstanding successive developments, *the idea of the New Dispensation could be remarkably traced back at least about a decade before* *

* More than a decade *i.e.*, since 1860.

the Minister's first acquaintance with the Paramhansa in March 1875.

A student of Keshab's life and teachings would find it even in a highly developed form before he had heard of the existence of such a man as Ramkrishna. The Brahmo Samaj of India was organized in 1866, the Brahma Mandir was consecrated in 1869. It is in this period of his starting on an independent career that the remarkable little anthology, the *Sloka Sangraha,* appeared. It contained selections from Scriptures of the Hindus, the Christians, the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Buddhists, the Zoroastrians, the Confucians and the Sikhs, with the translations of selected portions, and this brochure formed a beautiful garland of holy words which came into constant use among the Brahmos.

Let us now proceed, and give the reader a few quotations from the Lecture on the *"Future Church,"* delivered in 1869:

> "The constitution of the Future Church will be of a representative character, it will faithfully represent and satisfy those real wants and necessities of nature which have led to different systems of false worship, and which have been repeatedly proved in history. The idolater, the pantheist and the prophet-worshipper will there find what they actually want; their delusions, errors, and sins will certainly be destroyed but the genuine aspirations of their nature, all their normal cravings for spiritual aid, will be duly satisfied."

> *"The future creed of India will be a composite faith resulting from the union of the true and divine*

> *elements of Hinduism, Mohammedanism,* and showing the profound devotion of the one and the heroic enthusiasm of the other." "As regards Christianity and its relation to the Future Church of India, I have no doubt in my mind that it will exercise great influence on the formation and growth of that Church. The spirit of Christianity has already pervaded the whole atmosphere of Indian society, and we breathe and move in a Christian atmosphere. *But the future Church of India must be thoroughly national, it must be an essentially Indian Church.* India has religious traditions, and associations, tastes and customs, peculiarly sacred and dear to her just as every other country has, and it is idle to expect that she will forego these, nay, she cannot do so. They are interwoven with her very life".

It was in March 1875, that Keshab Chandra Sen and his friends first saw the Paramhansa and listened to his remarkable conversation in a garden at Belghoria. Before that they had not been even aware of his existence. Thence commenced a course of friendship, which lasted for the space of nine years up to the Minister's death in January 1884. Let us now turn to the anniversary Town Hall lecture of 1875—"Behold the Light of Heaven in India"—delivered on the 23rd January, about two months before the two met and conversed for the first time in their lives. Just note how that lecture opened:

> "Behold that heavenly light in the midst of India; how bright, how beautiful. How it ascends, extends and expands from day to day. Do you

see it? It is the light of a New Dispensation vouchsafed by Providence for India's salvation. And do you hear that sound, like the rushing of many waters? It is the voice of the Lord. The Almighty speaks unto our country, now, to-day, as He did before unto other nations''.

So it was full five years before the formal proclamation of the New Dispensation from the pulpit of the Brahma Mandir on Sunday morning, the 23rd January, 1880, that men had heard those remarkable words, which had surely no uncertain accents about them at all.

Let us have another quotation from the same lecture:

''These special dispensations of Providence differ, indeed, and must differ according to the peculiarities of each nation, but they never jar with each other. They cannot clash, though apparently dissimilar...... Can God oppose Himself? How then can His dispensations of saving light unto different nations conflict with each other? If there is harmony in God's love there must be harmony in the various ways in which it manifests itself for the salvation of man. What I accept as the New Dispensation in India neither shuts out God's light from the rest of the world, nor does it run counter to any of those marvellous dispensations of His mercy which were made in ancient times. It only shows a new adaptation of His eternal goodness, an Indian version and application of His universal love''.

We must also touch upon *the charge of mysticism* in later life which the Professor levels at Keshab explaining the feature by tracing it to the mystic influence of the

Paramhansa. *Neither the charge nor the explanation is correct*. If by mysticism, something like occultism, esotericism so-called or incoherent imagination is meant, Keshab had never any such stuff in him. If, on the other hand, you mean by mysticism God-intoxication, profound depth of spirituality, unutterable and unconquerable faith, "the vision and the faculty divine", the gift to utter the unutterable, these by all means he had, and not in a small measure either. It was not, however, a characteristic only of his later life. Open that booklet "True Faith", * a production of his early life, and you will find such mysticism in abundance. If you mean by mysticism his practical illustrations and applications of "the sacred secrets of symbolic faith" and think that these were either the outcome of a disordered brain or of the teachings of the Paramhansa alone, why turn again to that last-mentioned Lecture and read this passage:

> "By love we are incorporated with humanity, and humanity is incorporated with us. Our flesh and blood becomes the flesh and blood of all mankind while their flesh and blood become assimilated to and identified with ours......
>
> In such incorporation we see a perpetual celebration of the sacrament known as the Lord's Supper, in which the world eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the self-sacrificed martyr".

In this connection, we have to point out the singularly catholic and all-embracing manner in which Keshab Chandra Sen took up some of the time-worn rituals and

* "True Faith" was published in 1865. Keshab was then 27 years old.

ceremonies of the East and the West and fully illustrated them all. Is it not remarkable that at the very same time when he illustrated the *Hom* ceremony of the ancient Rishis and inaugurated the *Arati* as Guru Nanak had done before him, and went on with his spiritual interpretations of the gods and goddesses of the popular Hindu mythology, our Minister led us through the mysteries of the Baptism and the Eucharist and even instituted them as daily rites? Shall we not take note of the fact that at the very period in which the orthodox Hindus considered Keshab Chandra Sen approaching their idolatrous practices, his devotion to Jesus and his faith in the divine mission of the great Master did but all the more ripen and mature as the Lectures "India Asks Who is Christ" (April 1879) and "That Marvellous Mystery the Trinity" (January 1882), as well as numerous writings in the *New Dispensation* paper of that time will amply testify?

Let us, however, dwell for a moment on that other fact which is also remarkable, that *throughout his life Keshab Chandra Sen really continued to be the same uncompromising theist, notwithstanding all that he did towards the realization of a common faith. Idolatry, polytheism and pantheism were violently denounced and repudiated by him even unto the last.* Hear what he said in one portion of the lecture, "We Apostles of the New Dispensation, in the East" (January 1881):

> "Detestable Pantheism! Thou hast done incalculable mischief in India. This land has seen thy horrors as no other country has. Therefore thou shalt not be permitted to re-enact those horrors. We have had enough of this cursed pantheism. No more."

One more quotation. It is from the lecture, "That Marvellous Mystery the Trinity" (January 1882):

"And to you, ambassadors of Christ in India, let me say a word of warning. India is sick of idolatry. *Add not to the overcrowded pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses a fresh divinity in the name of Jesus.* Never say Christ is the very God of the universe, the Father of all mankind. If you preach 'him crucified' as your very Father you preach idolatry and heresy...... Therefore shun this hideous lie of Christ the Father and preach Christ the Son. Tell our people distinctly that Christ is not an incarnation like the myriad deities worshipped in this land. If you do not, you incur the tremendous risk of poisoning a whole nation with new forms of idolatry. Beware. Remember, you accept a terrible responsibility in preaching to the Hindu people. Here is a nation that had for ages believed that the Father himself becomes man and is incarnated in saints and prophets, and that the incarnation or *avatar* is to be worshipped not as the Son of God, but as the Supreme Father Himself. If to this nation you offer Christ as a new *avatar*, you plunge a country already darkened with superstition into an abyss of deeper darkness...... Here I stand, a sworn defender of the banner of Christ in India. I will see—God help me—that the pure banner of the Son of God is not polluted by any form of idolatry, and that it does not fall into the hands of the enemy through any remissness on the part of those commissioned to guard it. Here

I am, standing at the gate of India, with its key in my hand. And I say to all our enemies,—Away, India is locked up; ye shall have no entrance by force or stratagem. So long as I live I will guard my country's gate, with all the zeal of a patriotic soldier, against the emissaries of idolatry. *Let it be known throughout the length and breadth of the land that he who directly or indirectly preaches Christ as God the Father in human shape, preaches not Christ but anti-Christ, and deserves therefore to be treated as our bitterest foe. Hail sweet Christ. Hail Son of God. Begone idolatry. Preachers of idol-worship, adieu".*

Now, can anybody in his senses be foolhardy enough after this to identify the New Dispensation with *the eclectic ideas and sentiments* of the Paramhansa?

Endless quotations might be made from our Minister's *Bengali Sermons which contain even more of the characteristic teachings of Keshab Chandra than the great Town Hall Lectures,* to prove our position that there was no parting of the ways at all and that Ramkrishna's influence was only one among the numerous influences which helped to form the grand spirituality of one of the greatest men India ever produced. But we have not now the time and space. We would only earnestly recommend people to make a careful chronological study of Keshab's life and teachings.

It is to be observed in conclusion, that the Paramhansa himself was not a little influenced by Keshab as well as other men. We have no business to discuss that aspect of the case. But we would only refer to

the way in which Ramkrishna himself used to allude to the life and work of Keshab. *We will confine ourselves strictly to what we know of our own personal experience.*

Once when we (a few friends) were on a visit to the Saint of Dakshineshwar we had taken with us the revered mother of Keshab. As was to be expected the old lady prostrated herself before the Paramhansa in the usual Hindu fashion. Now just fancy how the latter returned her greetings. He addressed her in this way: "Why should *you* prostrate yourself before me? It is I that should prostrate myself at your feet. You are one even as Devaki (Krishna's mother) was, as Sachi (Chaitanya's mother) was". On more occasions than one did the Paramhansa observe in our own hearing that there appeared in the world from time to time certain men who were not of ordinary humanity, that they were a class by themselves, *Jiban muktas,* as he called them,—and that Keshab was one of those *Jiban muktas.* One must not for a moment believe that the saint was a mealy-mouthed flatterer with a considerably extra dose of false humility. He had a striking way of calling things by their real names, and in his remarks he never spared anybody, if he thought a man deserved to be censured. We often heard him strongly and sarcastically criticise the conduct of many Brahmos, missionaries among them!

It is really a disagreeable task for us to write on a subject which is not of our own choosing. *To us Keshab Chandra Sen was the man who held up before us the highest ideals of life and character and in whose life we found those ideals marvellously realized;* more than

that, he was the spokesman of a grand New Dispensation. On the other hand, the loving saint of Dakshineshwar was to us in his way the representative of a unique spiritual culture and we often sat at his feet and listened. Of either of them might any country be proud. But we are not to have any myths. *And who has now come forward to help the world in swallowing down this myth? The great Orientalist, the learned Pandit* whose name has become a household word in India and who was also a friend of Keshab Chandra Sen. What again is the main source from which the Professor has not only drawn his resources in the present connexion but turned them to a strange use? Why, from an old writing of another distinguished Indian who is still alive and himself a friend of the Professor, as well as the loyal friend of Keshab and who had a good deal of personal intercourse with the Paramhansa.—Verily, there has been a strange medley! (The Italics are ours.) (From the "*Interpreter and the Young Man*", November 1896).

(F)—MR. NAGENDRANATH GUPTA

(MODERN REVIEW.—Vol. I (1927), pp. 537—539, and Vol. I (1928), pp. 527 and 661.)

RAMKRISHNA PARAMHANSA

I

In 1881 Keshab Chandra Sen, accompanied by a fairly large party, went on board a steam yacht...... to Dakshineshwar to meet Ramkrishna Paramhansa. I had the good fortune to be included in that party.

We did not land—but the Paramhansa, accompanied by his nephew Hriday, who brought a basket of parched rice (মুড়ি) and some *sandesh* for us, boarded the steamer which steamed up the river towards Somra. The Paramhansa was wearing a red-bordered *dhoti* and a shirt which was not buttoned. We all stood up as he came on board and Keshab took the Paramhansa by the hand and made him sit close to him. Keshab then beckoned to me to come and sit near them and I sat down almost touching their feet. The Paramhansa was dark-complexioned, kept a beard, and his eyes never opened very wide and were introspective. He was of medium height, slender almost to leanness and very frail-looking. As a matter of fact, he had an exceptionally nervous temperament, and was extremely sensitive to the slightest physical pain. He spoke with a very slight but charming stammer in very plain Bengali, mixing the two "yous" (আপনি and তুমি) frequently. All the talking was practically done by the Paramhansa, and the rest, including Keshab himself, were respectful and eager listeners. It is now more than forty-five years ago that this happened and yet almost everything that the Paramhansa said is indelibly impressed on my memory. I have never heard any other man speak as he did. It was an unbroken flow of profound spiritual truths and experiences welling up from the perennial spring of his own devotion and wisdom. The similes and metaphors, the apt illustrations, were as striking as they were original. At times as he spoke he would draw a little closer to Keshab until part of his body was unconsciously resting in Keshab's lap, but Keshab sat perfectly still and made no movement to withdraw himself.

After he had sat down the Paramhansa glanced round him and expressed his approval of the company sitting around by saying, "বেশ বেশ! বেশ সব পটলচেরা চোখ" (Good, good: They have all good large eyes). Then he peered at a young man wearing English clothes and sitting at a distance on a capstan. "উনি কে? ওকে সাহেব দেখছি" (Who is that? He looks like a Saheb). Keshab smilingly explained that it was a young Bengli who had just returned from England. The Paramhansa laughed, "তাই বল মশাই, সাহেব দেখলে ভয় করে কি না!" (That's right. One feels afraid of Saheb.).........The next moment he lost all interest in the people present and began to speak of the various ways in which he used to perform his *sadhana*. "Sometimes I would fancy myself the Brahminy duck calling for its mate" (আমি ডাকতুম 'চকা' আর অমি আমার ভিতর থেকে রা আসতো 'চকী') There is a poetic tradition in Sanskrit that the male and female of a brace of Brahminy ducks spend the night on the opposite shores of a river and keep calling to each other. Again, "I would be the kitten calling for the mother cat and there would be the response of the mother" (আমি বলতুম 'মিউ' আর, জেনো, ধাড়ী বেরাল বলতো 'ম্যাও') After speaking in this strain for some time he suddenly pulled himself up and said with the smile of a child, "জেনো মশাই, গোপন সাধনের সব কথা বলতে নেই" (Everything about secret *sadhana* should not be told.) He explained that it was impossible to express in language the ecstasy of divine communion when the human soul loses itself in the contemplation of the Deity. Then he looked at some of the faces around him and spoke at length on the indications of character by physiognomy. Every feature of the human face was expressive of some

particular trait of character. The eyes were the most important but all other features, the forehead, the ears, the nose, the lips and the teeth were helpful in the reading of character.—And so the marvellous monologue went on until the Paramhansa began to speak of the *Nirakar* (formless) *Brahman*. "যে ঐ নিরাকার রূপ তারি ধারণা চাই" (the manifestation of the Formless has to be realised). He repeated the word *Nirakar* two or three times and then quietly passed into *samadhi*, as the diver slips into the fathomless deep. While the Paramhansa remained unconscious Keshab Chandra Sen explained that recently there had been some conversation between himself and the Paramhansa about the *Nirakar Brahman* and the Paramhansa appeared to be profoundly moved.

We intently watched Ramkrishna Paramhansa in *samadhi*. The whole body relaxed and then became slightly rigid. There was no twitching of the muscles or nerves, no movement of any limb. Both his hands lay in his lap with the fingers lightly interlocked. The sitting posture of the body (আসন) was easy, but absolutely motionless. The face was slightly tilted up and in repose. The eyes were nearly but not wholly closed. The eyeballs were not turned up or otherwise deflected, but they were fixed and conveyed no message of outer objects to the brain. The lips were parted in a beatific and indescribable smile, disclosing the gleam of the white teeth. There was something in that wonderful smile which no photograph was ever able to reproduce.

We gazed in silence for several minutes at the motionless form of the Paramhansa and then Troilokya Nath

Sanyal, the singing apostle of Keshab Chandra Sen's Church, sang a hymn to the accompaniment of a drum and cymbals (খোল করতাল). As the music swelled in volume the Paramhansa opened his eyes and looked around him as if he was in a strange place. The music stopped. The Paramhansa looking at us said, "এরা সব কারা ?" (Who are these people?) And then he vigorously slapped the top of his head several times, and cried out, "নেবে যা—নেবে যা" (Go down, go down) No one made any mention of the trance. The Paramhansa became fully conscious and sang in a pleasant voice, "শ্যামা মা কি কল করেচে, কালী মা কি কল করেচে" (What a wonderful machine Kali the Mother has made!) After the song the Paramhansa gave a luminous exposition as to how the voice should be trained to singing and the characteristics of a good voice.

It was fairly late in the evening when we returned to Calcutta after landing the Paramhansa at Dakshineshwar. No carriages could be had at Ahiritola Ghat and Keshab had to walk all the way to Musjidbari Street to the house of Kali Charan Banerji, who had invited him to dinner.

It has to be mentioned that sometime after the incident I went to see "M" a devout disciple and follower of Ramkrishna Paramhansa and the wellknown compiler of the sayings and teachings of the Paramhansa. I am related to "M" and I urged him to go and see the remarkable holy man at Dakshineshwar. "M" first saw the Paramhansa in 1882, and he reminded me the other day in Calcutta how this came about at my suggestion.

The Paramhansa died in 1886. That was the third year of my stay at Karachi, but just about that time I

happened to be in Calcutta. I followed the bier of the Paramhansa to the burning-ghat. All the disciples were there and Troilokya Nath Sanyal (of Keshab's Church) was also present.

NOTE.—Besides Bhai Troilokya Nath Sanyal, Bhai Amritalal Bose, Rev. Girish Chandra Sen, Rajmohan Bose, Dr. Gopal Chandra Bose and several other members of the Navavidhan Church took part in the funeral procession.

KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

Of Keshab Chandra Sen's greatness, of his graciousness and charm of manner, all who had the privilege of coming in contact with him had only one opinion. He was strikingly handsome with a fairly tall and full figure, and he could never be mistaken for an ordinary man. As an orator I have never met his peer, and I heard many Indian, English and American orators. The characteristic feature of his oratory was that he held himself always in easy command: there was hardly any gesticulation and he would sometimes thrill his audience by lifting a finger. His voice was of such power and compass, albeit smooth and silvery in its flow, that it filled the Town Hall of Calcutta almost without an effort. He rarely gave way to emotion, but on one occasion tears streamed from his eyes while delivering one of his annual addresses at the Town Hall. The subject was "Am I An Inspired Prophet?" As an orator in Bengali I have heard no one else sway his hearers as he did. In the last Bengali address that he delivered in the Beadon Garden in Calcutta I noticed a hostile element, consisting of a number of Vaishnavas, who

were scoffing at him loudly before he began to speak, and yet those very men were so carried away by the orator's appeal that they shouted "Hari Bol" and rolled on the grass in an ecstasy of emotion and admiration.

Keshab had a fine sense of humour. For some time he used to hold a theological class in the Albert Hall on Saturdays, and the audience was composed of advanced college students, professors and others, with a sprinkling of Europeans. A glass of water was usually placed before the speaker. One day a youngman who had been sitting in front of Keshab close to the table and had been looking up with rapt admiration at the speaker quietly raised the glass of water and drank it off as soon as Keshab had finished his lecture and resumed his seat. Keshab quietly smiled and said in Bengali, "I thought speaking for a long time made a man rather thirsty, but I now see that listening to a speech is also thirsty work."

Whether Keshab Chandra Sen will take high and permanent rank among the religious reformers of India time alone will determine. In spite of his great powers he was considerably hampered by the cares and burden of a large family. After his death I wrote a booklet in English which attracted the favourable attention of some men of note and was considered worthy of notice by the Bengal Government, but a youngman's enthusiasm is not always worth much and time is the truest appraiser. As regards the eclectic church founded by Keshab Chandra Sen and known as the New Dispensation, it has not made much headway in the forty odd years that have passed after the death of the founder. Still the country will always cherish the memory of Keshab

Chandra Sen as that of a great man endowed with high gifts and who upheld the truth as he saw it.

RAMKRISHNA PARAMHANSA

II

He (Ramkrishna) went to the Adi Brahmo Samaj on the Chitpur Road in Calcutta and was much impressed by the genuine and deep devotion of Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. Up to this time Ramkrishna Paramhansa was mainly concerned with India of the ancient creeds and the ancient forms of worship, the worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu. Kali and Krishna. He had also given thought to religions that had originated out of India. The intensity of his devotion and faith had brought on strange visional experiences. And now he came into direct touch with India of the present, leavened by Western education and Western thought. He went himself to see Keshab Chandra Sen, the great gifted and deeply devout leader of the Brahmo Samaj of India, and very soon there sprang up between these two kindred spirits a deep intimacy based upon their earnest religious feelings. Both were well advanced in their convictions, both were full of real humanity. When Ramkrishna once asked Keshab to deliver a speech the latter replied, "Am I to vend needles in a blacksmith's shop? I would rather listen to your words." I may recall another unreported instance of Keshab's humility. When Father Luke Rivington an eloquent priest of the Roman Catholic Church delivered some addresses in Calcutta, some people in Keshab's hearing remarked that Father Rivington could not be compared to Keshab as an orator.

Keshab deprecated this remark and said Father Rivington was a big drum while he was like a child's drum. Ramkrishna often spoke of himself with the utmost humility.........

There has been some speculation and theorising about the influence exercised by Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Keshab Chandra Sen upon each other. The followers and admirers of both these teachers have claimed the larger share of influence for their own Master. A speculation of this kind is neither profitable nor edifying. Both of these great men had remarkable personalities, both had high respect for each other, both must have derived some advantage from their loving and intimate intercourse.........

Following the distinguished lead of Keshab Chandra Sen other men of note began visiting Ramkrishna Paramhansa. The papers controlled by Keshab published some of his sayings and drew attention to the saintliness of his character. Max Muller heard of him and wrote an account of him and quoted his sayings. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar of the Brahmo Samaj, a man of high intellectual attainments, wrote several articles remarkable for their eloquence and expression of warm admiration.

It has been stated that Ramkrishna Paramhansa was an idolater and officiated for some time as a priest of the temple of the goddess Kali at Dakshineshwar. According to all accounts idolatry is a debased from of worship.......And yet no theist or pantheist, Christian or Mussalman, who saw Ramkrishna ever dreamed of despising his faith.

The message of God or Goddess was to him only a

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symbol.......His speech, his life, his wrapt intentness dispelled the illusion that he was content with a crude and primitive form of belief.

He owed nothing to books for he never read them....... But every doctrine, every tenet of this ancient accumulation of Aryan wisdom and belief were as simple to him as the A B C of the primer to an intelligent child.......... Unlike a Hindu, who is usually satisfied with the religion of his fathers, he inquired about other religions and discovered the Truth in all......Muhammad was unlettered and the Koran was uttered.......Paramhansa, when not citing the scriptures about which he had heard, used the simplest similes and illustrations derived from observation of the things and incidents of everyday life..........

.........The gospel of Ramkrishna Paramhansa is not a new creed and it does not seek to set up a new religion.... ......There may be many religions, but there is only one Truth.........

The secret of the remarkable success of Vivekananda's mission to the West is to be found in the teachings of the Master. There is no exhortation to prefer one creed to another. There is no suggestion of eclecticism..........

The Maths of Belur and Mayavati were founded with funds supplied by the English and American disciples of Vivekananda.

.........Ramkrishna Paramhansa lived an humble life forty-five years ago. Today he is regarded as an *avatar* by many ; who can tell what place will be assigned to him a thousand years hence?.........

If we say one *avatar* is greater than another, or the founder of one religion is endowed more highly than another we sow afresh seeds of disputes that have been

the bane of all religions. And how are comparisons between these Teachers to be made? Is it by a comparison of the miracles attributed to each one of them, or by the number of the following of each and the extent of their spiritual dominion? Either of these tests would be misleading......... How can we call one prophet or teacher greater than another when we really know nothing of either? But human presumption is equalled by human ignorance, and we solemnly proclaim someone as a full incarnation and another as a part incarnation of God as if we carry in our poor heads and puny hands an instrument to compare kings and emperors, fools and wisemen, men of wit and men of wealth, poets and philosophers, but the yard-stick that can measure the masters of mercy and the Lords of Truth, the guides and teachers of human race, the path-finders who point out the ways that lead to salvation, has not been made.

In thinking of such Teachers let us at least endeavour to reach a frame of mind in which we may truthfully say, "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief". And belief comes not in the pride of intellect or the rigidity of dogma, but on the lowliness of the spirit, the receptivity of the soul to light, whencesoever it may come.

NOTE.—In this article Mr. Gupta has evidently made a mistake. He has written in one place that "The first great evangelist of the doctrine of the truth in all religions was the Swami Vivekananda". That is not a fact. Keshab Chandra Sen proclaimed Navavidhan in 1880, when Vivekananda was in the second year Class of his College, and was in touch with Keshab and the Brahmo Samaj.

In 1881 Keshab Chandra proclaimed that "all religions are true" (*vide* 'The Sunday Mirror' of October 23,

1881; also at page 69 of "Keshab As Seen By His Opponents").

Swami Vivekananda was quite unknown to the public till he made his debut on the platform of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. If Vivekananda preached that there is truth in all religions, he was certainly not the first to do it; we may remind Mr. Gupta that long ago Raja Rammohan, Maharshi Debendranath and the Brahmos in general had preached it.

(G)—MR. ASHWINI KUMAR DUTT

'Dharmatattwa', 16th Agrahayan, 1334, B.S. (1927) pp. 150-151.

(Translated from Bengali)

Mr. Moti Lal Das of Dacca furnishes us with the following testimony of Mahatma Ashwini Kumar Dutt of Barisal:—

One day Ashwini Babu went to Dakshineshwar to see Ramkrishna Paramhansadeb who sat there in his room wearing a fine black-bordered *dhoti* and seemed to be very restless and anxious for somebody, once going out and then coming into the room again as if he was awaiting the arrival of somebody. Just at the moment Brahmananda Keshab Chandra with a smile on his face and a few friends reached there. As soon as Paramhansadeb saw Keshab, an unearthly smile stole over his majestic face. He was as happy as a loving mother when she meets her only son after a long separation. He at once caught hold of his friend's hands and feelingly said, "you are late; I thought you wouldn't come today,

so I was very anxious". Ashwini Kumar marvelled at the blessed union of these two kindred souls and was able to make out the cause of Paramhansa's anxiety above referred to. However, after a while Paramhansadeb asked Keshab, "কিছু হবে কি ?" (any thing to have?). Keshab readily replied, "of course". Ashwini Kumar quite followed them. They asked for the wine of heaven. Immediately began the Kirtan with the sound of Mridanga and Kartal, rending the sky. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds. Those two enthusiastic Bhaktas, being intoxicated with the wine of *Harinam*, commenced dancing, with hands joined and keeping time to the Mridanga and Kartal.

On another occasion, during the Maghotsav festival Sri Keshab Chandra with his party went to Dakshineshwar in a steamer chanting the name of Hari all the way. It was a heavenly sight for those who were present there that day.

There was the steamer decorated with flowers, festoons and flags of many colours; open clear azure sky overhead, free delicious air blowing on all sides; the broad bosom of the great Ganges dancing under the twilight of the evening sky. Nature seemed to have opened her bounties of marvellous beauty. The Bhaktas, with brown *chaddars* on their shoulders and flower-garlands on their necks, with hearts filled with enthusiasm and love, faces lighted up by ineffable beauty, dancing the mystic dance with Sri Keshab Chandra in their centre, presented a sight both cheering and inspiring. At that time Paramhansadeb was sitting in his room at Dakshineshwar Mandir with a few select Bhaktas conversing with them on deep religious subjects and Mahatma

Ashwini Kumar Dutt was also there amongst them. Suddenly he stopped and exclaimed with uncontrollable emotion—"Here comes Keshab with his party" pointing his finger towards the steamer. Some of his Bhaktas tried to pacify him but in vain. He again exclaimed with greater excitement, "Can't ye follow?" "Who can sing such Kirtan but Keshab's party?" He at once ran out of the room and proceeded towards the river bank. By this time the steamer with Keshab and his party reached the Dakhineshwar Ghat and the Kirtan rose to its climax. It was impossible to control Paramhansadeb. He was impatient to get into the steamer. One of his beloved disciples was trying to restrain him saying, "Where are you going, Thakur?" But he smilingly replied, "Go back. *Radha* is going to meet her *Shyam* who is in the steamer". As soon as he entered the steamer, he folded Sri Keshab on his bosom and twice said, "Thou art my Shyam, I am thy Radha". "Thou art my Shyam, I am thy Radha." The whole party was then flooded with ineffable bliss and *bhakti*. A true heavenly sight indeed!

(H)—REV. PRIYA NATH MALLIK

[This is a free translation of an article in Bengali setting forth Bhai Priya Nath's personal reminiscences—written at our request for inclusion in this book. Extracts from his previous writings have also been incorporated.]

It is painful to think that the so-called disciples of the great Paramhansa Ramkrishna, who know little and understand less of their master, go about inventing and relating stories with a view to prove that he was an

incarnation of God. Very few of the large body of his followers saw him in person or heard his voice. Their proneness to exaggeration—perhaps in keeping with the present-age preference for fiction—as well as their notions that seeing gods in dreams, going into hysteric fits and falling into *dasa* or trance, or being possessed by ghosts are signs of high spirituality,—makes them draw unconscious caricatures of their Guru! It is also easy for them to spread their views widely by pandering to the popular preference for the yellow robe and for the name of 'Hinduism'. But truth is truth and Dharma or the right must triumph in the end.

The writer of this article in his youth kept company both of Keshab and Ramkrishna and watched their careers and heard wisdom from the lips of both. And so he feels it a duty to make a protest against the many things that are being said and done for the deification of Ramkrishna.

Sjt. Rajmohan Bose was a lay *sadhak* of Navavidhan. He once said, half in fun, to a Ramkrishna-ite that however hard they may strive to set up another incarnation, the fate of the new incarnation will be the same as that of the previous ten; and that in the end the simple people, now taken in, will turn on the *avatar*-makers!

Such a fate will ultimately befall all the present attempts at deification of Ramkrishna and a serious warning is needed.

1. Our brethren of the Ramkrishna *panth* (creed) hold that Ramkrishna was an incarnation of God. But Ramkrishna himself only a few days before his death told me when he heard such fulsome adulation—

"*Shalara* amake bale kina ami Iswar; Shalader bujhiye boloto Iswar ki kakhano golar ghaey morey?*" (These fellows say that I am God; ask the stillies if God ever dies of sore (cancer) in the throat?)

Ramkrishna no doubt in his realisation of *Yoga*, and from his monistic standpoint made statements about unity with God. But such statements are not unknown in the case of other highly spiritual *sadhaks*. Keshab also said once, "If you have not seen God, look at me: two have become one (here in me)"

2. A second conceit of our friends of the Ramkrishna cult is that Keshab learnt to adore God as Mother from Ramkrishna.

Now Ramkrishnadeva went to Belghoria Tapoban to meet Keshab for the first time in March 1875. Before that, Keshab neither knew Ramkrishna nor knew of him even by name. On the other hand, Ramkrishna had gone eight or nine years before to the Adi Samaj to listen to Keshab and had noted, as he said afterwards, that "the preacher's (Keshab's) *fatna* (float of the angling rod) had dipped in the waters of Brahma" (had sunk deep into God).

God was referred to and addressed as Mother frequently in the decade before 1875. This will be borne out by the following few fragments of hymns composed and sung in those days and that I can recall:

(1) Jananir koley basi kenorey abodh mon karicha rodan.
(Sitting on the lap of thy Mother why art thou crying, O my foolish soul?)

(2) Keba janey kata sukh ratna diben mata loeye tar amrita

* *Shalara* is the plural of *shala*—wife's brother—a common abusive term in India.

niketaney. (Who knows what wealth of happiness the Mother will give us in the Eternal Home.)

(3) Jagat janani, jananir Janani Tumi go Mata. (Thou art Mother of the Universe, Mother of mothers)

(4) Snehamayee mata haye putra kanya gane laye basechen Anandamayee anandadhamey (In the abode of Bliss the loving Mother is sitting with Her sons and daughters around Her.)

(5) Charan dehee mata katar janey. (O Mother give the protection of Thy feet to those afflicted.)

Further it is found that in January 1872, Keshab gave a sermon to Brahmo ladies on the theme that the "Supreme Mother is very anxious about her daughters". In the Maghotsav of 1875, just before making Paramhansa's acquaintance, in a sermon the following passages occur:—

(1) Ma key jadi na dekhiley tabey jey tomra matriheen. (If you have not seen the Mother, then you are motherless).

(2) Ma samasta deen dharey bosia achen. (The Mother is waiting for you the whole day).

(3) Amader Janani kemon, tanhakey cheenia, tanhari anchal dharia, anantakal tanhakey ma bolia dakia sukhi hoeetey paribey. (You can be happy only by finding out what our Mother is like, only by knowing Her, by taking shelter under Her cloth like a child; and by calling to Her as Mother throughout Eternity).

(4) Katakal ar tomara aee boleia krandan karibay? ma nikatey. (How long are you going to cry in distress? Mother is near you).

(5) Ma ke na dekhiley je ar sukh nai. (There is no happiness until you see your Mother).

(6) Je ek bar ma ke dekhechey se pagaler mata hoechey. (He who has seen his Mother even once becomes mad as it were).

Do not all these rather show that the Motherhood of God was revealed by the Mother Herself unto Brahmananda?

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It is wonderful how the Formless great Brahma revealed Himself in Keshab's life as "Dayamay Hari" (God of Mercy) and then as "Mother" to prepare his life for the unfolding of the New Dispensation and at the same time brought him into relation with *Bhakta Sadhaks* of corresponding spirit for spiritual union. Among them were Swami Dayananda Saraswati and the *Paohari Baba* of Gazipore. To them was added Paramhansa in due time. It is ludicrous to think that Keshab borrowed the *matribhab*, the idea of worshiping God as Mother, from Ramkrishna. It is the leading of the Spirit that took him to it, though it is quite likely that meeting and intercourse with Paramhansa encouraged and enriched his *Sadhan* in this respect. The late Bhai Pratap Chandra and Bhai Girish Chandra were of opinion that the life of Paramhansa kindled *matribhab* in the Brahmo Samaj; but by that they did not mean that the Brahmo Samaj learnt it for the first time from Paramhansa. Bhai Girish Chandra was the first to collect and publish Paramhansa's sayings and in that book he distinctly said that the lives of Paramhansa and Acharya Keshab were of mutual help and that the Paramhansa, through the influence of Keshab, advanced towards greater appreciation of the Spirit God and towards liberalism in religion and steadfastness in truth.

The truth is that both the *Sadhaks* exchanged and accepted each other's experiences. Yet there was a difference. Ramkrishna's and Keshab's conceptions of God were not identical. Ramkrishna used to worship the material image of Kali as Mother. To Keshab the Formless Parambrahma, the Spirit Brahma, revealed Himself as Mother and taught him to address Him as

Mother. No *man* taught him this. On the other hand, *in my presence and in my hearing* Ramkrishna acknowledged to Keshab his own indebtedness in these words, "Keshab, *tomar kachey eley amar chauddopoa ma galey jai*" (Keshab when I come to you my material Mother melts away).

3. The followers of Ramkrishna are also carrying on a mischievous propaganda that Brahmananda Keshab Chandra learnt also from Ramkrishna the great doctrine of *Samanvaya* (Synthesis of Religions). There is absolutely no foundation for such a view.

Far back in 1867 when the Brahmo Samaj of India was established, the beginning of Dharma Samanvaya (Synthesis of Religions) was made in the *Sloka Sangraha* —a compilation of verses from all the religious scriptures of the world. In his lecture of 23rd January 1869 on "Future Church" Keshab Chandra spoke clearly as follows:

"One religion shall be acknowledged by all men, one God shall be worshipped throughout the length and breadth of the world, all nations shall dwell together in the 'Father's House'—Yet each shall have its own peculiar and free mode of action. There shall, in short, be unity of spirit but diversity of forms; one body, but different limbs, one vast community with members labouring in different ways."

Again in January 1875, in his lecture on "Behold the Light of Heaven in India," he emphatically announced that the religion of harmony had come to India as a New Dispensation: "It is a Light of New Dispensation vouchsafed by Providence for India's salvation." Two months after this lecture Keshab Chandra

for the first time met Ramkrishna in Belghoria *Tapoban*. How can it be said then that he received the message of Samanvaya (Harmony of Religions) from Paramhansa? It is rather possible that when Keshab Chandra was burning with the Spirit of Navavidhan, Paramhansa meeting him came under his influence and learnt Dharma Samanvaya.

There is a kind of Dharma Samanvaya in rural India where a Hindu worships Kali and Durga, and at the same time makes offerings to *Olabibi* (goddess of cholera), and to Satya Pir and Manik Pir (village saints of the Mohamedans). Ramkrishna was always an image-worshipping Hindu and his liberalism of religion was of this rural type till coming under the influence of Keshab's devotion to Jesus, he also learned to salute pictures of Jesus. His views were much liberalised and the spirit of Samanvaya grew in him. But in his ways and habits he remained a worshipper of Kali *murti* (idol). And what are his followers doing now in their professed path of Samanvaya? They have changed one idol for another and are still engaged in idol worship. What indications are there that they are practising, in the spirit of Samanvaya, the contemplation of Mohamed's Formless God and the Sadhana of Vedantic Nirakar (formless) Spirit Brahma and the Nirvan of Sri Buddha?

The Samanvaya Vidhan professed and taught by Keshab Chandra is not merely a doctrine ot Samanvaya, but it was the culture of his life. In reality his life became an expression of the Samanvaya life of Navavidhan when he adopted for his *sadhan* the *"Ichcha yoga"* (surrender of will) of Jesus, the faith in God of Moses, the Nirvan of Buddha and the loving ecstasy

of Chaitanya. In his life, the lives of all saints and prophets and the spiritual discipline of all religions mingled in chemical combination, as it were, to form the new culture of Navavidhan.

Paramhansadeb did neither practise nor teach this lofty Samanvaya. No one can teach this to another. The Supreme Brahma, the Sachchidananda alone, in Whom Synthesis abides for ever, can reveal it to a man. It is the truth to say that Keshab Chandra learned his lesson of Synthesis from no one but the Holy Spirit, Who inspires us all. Ramkrishna certainly cultivated the synthesis of *Bhakti* and *Yoga*, while in Keshab is to be found a synthesis of *Yoga, Bhakti, Karma, Gyan*—a synthesis that entitled him to proclaim the Navavidhan.

It may be pertinently asked—what are the followers of Ramkrishna doing for the synthesis of *Bhakti* and *Yoga* that their master practised?

4. It is also to be noted that those who describe themselves as the Ramkrishna sect have moulded themselves more after Vivekananda than after Ramkrishna for they ostentatiously affect the yellow garb, call themselves Swamis and profess *Adwaitabad*. Ramkrishna never put on the yellow robe, nor called himself a Swami. Everyone knows that the first part of Vivekananda's life was formed in the Brahmo Samaj. At the very first he made acquaintance of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, then, after he came to know me, he began to have leanings towards Navavidhan. It was I who took him and introduced him to Keshab, and he came to be selected to act as *ritwik* and do some singing in the staging of the '*Nababrindabañ*' (a religious drama). Vivekananda used to call me *hazrat* in fondness and

treated me with deference. In those days I conducted divine service and he used to sing hymns. One day while we were at worship thus, the late Ramchandra Dutt brought Paramhansa there. Paramhansadeb listened to the *upasana* and hymns and at the end started an ecstatic *kirtan* himself. Then he told Naren (Vivekananda), "*Tor gaan shunay ami baro khusi hoyechi, tooi amar kache jaas*" (I am very pleased with your song, you come to me). From that day Naren began to call me *acharya*. So long, he was an intellectual rationalistic *Brahmajnani* Brahmo. From now he came under the influence of Paramhansa and the course of his life was changed and, leaving us, he eventually became the St. Paul of the Paramhansa sect. Keshab Chandra said once that the men of his circle could easily become leaders in other movements and this was illustrated very well by the career of Vivekananda. At another place Keshab Chandra said that to belong to his circle was to live in a zone of fire and no one in that circle could stand its test to be called a "Sadhu."

Ramkrishna was really a simple, child-like, God-seeking and God-intoxicated *Bhakta*. When Ramkrishna had no disciples, except one or two casual visitors only, Keshab Chandra had a good many followers. So, he (Ramkrishna) was also anxious to organise a band of followers, and got Narendra Nath as a member for such a band. Narendra Nath belonged to our (Brahmo) community then, and was a great friend of ours. From that time also the disciples of Ramkrishna began to gather round him and tried to give him the place of God. The Pantheists consider their Guru as God. Paramhansa was addressed as Thakur, Iswar

(God), etc., by his disciples which he did not, however, like. His nature was of Dashya Prakriti (the spirit of service). He always bowed down his head as soon as anybody approached him.

Bhai Mallik adds:

My age is now 73 years and of the men that I brought within the fold of Navavidhan, Bhabani (Upadhya Brahmabandav) and Naren (Vivekananda) became famous and even world-famous as speakers and leaders and have passed away and I am left here as insignificant as ever. But I can bear witness boldly that both these men, specially Vivekananda, owed the beginnings of their spiritual culture to the pattern set by Keshab Chandra.

My friend Narendranath has really put on this pattern of Keshab Chandra the label of Paramhansa, and calling it *neo-Hinduism*, had it tested and popularised in America and brought it back to this land to give it a fresh currency and incidentally made himself famous. In these days of advertisement and propaganda in the Press, trade in religion succeeds on the same lines as any other trade. In this matter the remarks of Keshab Chandra regarding his opponents of the Sadharan Samaj are applicable to Vivekananda also,—"I have no enemies. Those who profess to be my enemies are my friends in disguise for they are myself reproduced." By whatever name Vivekananda might have been known he was an imitation of Keshab Chandra. The followers of Vivekananda have signalised their activities by undertaking philanthropic work and in this they are only carrying out the *Seva Sadhan* that Keshab Chandra first introduced in the Brahmo Samaj and which the Brahmos seem to have forgotten. In this the followers of Vivekananda are

working the ideals of Navavidhan and for this we are certainly grateful. Their self-sacrifice is very commendable.

Ramkrishna had very few disciples while he was on his death-bed. Many of us nursed him during his last illness. How many sleepless nights were spent for nursing him by my dear and beloved friend Hirananda of Sindh, who was a member of the Navavidhan Church.

I may mention here that the last rites of Ramkrishnadeb were performed by friends mostly of our Navavidhan Samaj. Sangitacharya Bhai Troilokyanath, Bhakta Bhai Amrita Lal Bose, my father-in-law Rajmohan Bose and several youngmen led by Sadhu Hirananda of Sindh performed the cremation and brought the ashes home. The little quantity of the ashes that I took from Bhai Amrita Lal is still preserved in my Brahmananda Asram at Bagnan. I, along with Bhai Amrita Lal and others of our Church, also performed the rites, according to Nava Samhita, of laying down the ashes in the Kankurgachi garden of the late Ram Chandra Dutta. Most of the people present there, so far as I can recall, belonged to the Navavidhan Samaj; only three or four were direct followers of Ramkrishna.

Surely we do not lag behind in appreciating Ramkrishna's greatness and goodness although we do not call him the God of the universe. We have seen the wild, intoxicating *bhakti* of Sri Gouranga well manifested in the life of Paramhansadeb, we have seen in him a living Nava-Gouranga of modern times. We sang with him, we danced with him, we enjoyed immense love-feast as it were in his company which we can never forget or deny. Really he was a *bhakta* with exuberant love.

Bhai P. N. Mallik further adds:

The following utterances of Paramhansa Ramkrishna, made and repeated on several occasions in my presence and hearing, will testify to the love and high regard that he had for Minister Keshab Chandra Sen, and show that he never claimed for himself the place of God:

(1) Keshab is like a *banyan* tree giving shade and shelter to many. I (Ramkrishna) am like a palm tree shed of its branches—just standing by myself.

(2) Keshab is like a steamboat forging ahead and hauling many a "donkey" boat (cargo boat), I am like a floating banana skin; I sink as soon as anything gets on top.

(3) Once he embraced Keshab in a great emotion and spoke out: "You are *Shyam* (Krishna) and I am *Radha* (the devoted lover): I am *Shyam* and you are *Radha*," *—and then lost consciousness.

(4) On another occasion he took hold of the hands of Keshab and they danced together shouting—"মা আমাদের, আমরা মায়ের"—(The Mother is ours, and we are Mother's).

(5) If anyone asked for any instructions in spiritual matters from Ramkrishna, he used to refer the inquirer to Keshab, saying it was Keshab's province.

(6) Ramkrishna told Keshab in my presence that as soon as he (Ramkrishna) came in contact with Keshab, his (Ramkrishna's) 3½ cubit Ma (idol Kali) melted away. —By this he meant that through Keshab's influence his (Ramkrishna's) idolatry gave way to the worship of the Formless God.

* Ramkrishna made similar statements to the late Ashwini Kumar Dutt of Barisal.

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(7) In my presence Ramkrishna abused the idol Kali saying: "You *Shali* (contemptuous term) so long you did not allow me to see the real (formless) *Mother*. *— I shall no longer see the face of that *Shali*—the idol *i.e.*, Kali.

I had the privilege to witness these scenes and felt blessed.

So the reader will understand the real relation between Keshab and Ramkrishna. Keshab was the unifier and harmoniser of all religions, and a householder 'Yogi' with family—while Ramkrishna shunned both wealth and woman; he was an austere Sannyasi and a Hindu.

The following contribution of Bhai Mallik is taken from *Dharmatattwa*. 16th Jaistha 1332 B.S., (30th May 1925):

In Basumati (Monthly Edition) of Baisak 1332, "Sree M" (of Kathamrita) writes as follows:

"Thakur Ramkrishna loved Keshab and Keshab in return respected him. Keshab used to invite him to his place (Lily Cottage) during the Brahmotsav celebrations and on other occasions also. One day on his arrival, Keshab took him to his Sanctuary and offered flowers and sandalwood-paste to his feet, devoutly worshipped him and bowed down before him. None was present there at that time. The Thakur himself narrated this incident before the late Bejoy Krishna Goswami and other *bhaktas*."

Almost on all occasions from the very beginning we

* Ramkrishna spoke similarly to the late Troilokyanath Deb of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

used to be present during the interviews, mutual conversations and interchange of friendly greetings of Ramkrishna and Keshab. I began to visit Paramhansadeb from about the same time as "Sree M," the writer of the above extract began to do so, but we had never witnessed, nor even heard of any such thing. We are not aware of the alleged secret act of Keshab. It is our firm conviction that there is not a particle of truth in this story. It is absurd on the face of it that Keshab, like an ordinary idolater or Guru-worshipper, would worship Paramhansa with flowers and sandal-paste. It was against his religious convictions, against his principles, and against his nature. He never worshipped any human being as Guru or God. Moreover, he never performed any ceremony in secret. Though Keshab loved all *bhaktas*, he was dead against worshipping them as Man-God. It is an unalloyed lie, manufactured and invented to deceive idolatrous people, to say that Keshab, who would not accept Jesus and Gouranga as gods but considered them only as spiritually advanced human beings, would worship Ramkrishna as God or Guru. It is alleged that this alleged secret incident was narrated by Ramkrishna to the late Bejoy Krishna Goswami and some other persons. Bejoy Krishna is dead. No living witness has been named. Even if any living person say so, he could not be relied upon inasmuch as his statement would be nothing short of pure concocted lie. I earnestly point out to our revered friend "Sree M," who is a veteran schoolmaster of long experience and is expected to know fully the duties of a teacher, that his "Kathamrita" should not have contained things as may lead others from truth to untruth, from life to death.

As already said we used to be present almost on all occasions, whenever and wherever Keshab and Ramkrishna met, either at Dakshineshwar or at the Lily Cottage or on board the steamer or elsewhere. We always found Keshab a silent listener to the profuse effusions of Ramkrishna. He never asked questions nor entered into any discussions. It was foreign to his nature. There was no necessity for the same, inasmuch as all along Keshab said that his Guru or preceptor was the Lord of the Universe Himself, that he never sat at the feet of any ordinary teacher to learn, that he never took any human being for his ideal and that God Himself was his Guru and ideal.

Note.—After Bhai Mallik's protest "Sree M" modified his statements (*vide* p. 101 of this book).

CHAPTER VI

REV. PROMOTHO LOLL SEN

ON

PARAMHANSA AND NAVAVIDHAN

[Rev. P. L. Sen stayed with us at Allahabad for over two months (November, December, 1929 and part of January, 1930). We then requested him to favour us with a note of his personal experiences regarding Paramhansa Ramkrishna and Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen, as we intended to incorporate the same in this book. Rev. Sen accordingly jotted down his thoughts from day to day in the form of Notes, but unfortunately he did not live long enough to give them proper shape and serial arrangement. We present the Notes as they stand, in incomplete form. Though incomplete they are a very valuable contribution to a proper study of Navavidhan and would throw light on many important points raised in this book].

(ALLAHABAD, *24th November, 1929.*)

New atmosphere created in the New Dispensation. New and original relations with the Supreme Being—the Para Brahma. "Faith is direct vision"—preached and practised by Keshab and his fellow-apostles, and a new spiritual atmosphere was created by them. The relations of men and women to their Maker and to one another were new. In the atmosphere of the old Hindu Society these original relations were not possible (permitted). A new worship distinctly came into being, not only different from the old Hindu Pujah,—but the new Brahma Upasana introduced by Maharshi Debendra Nath. The new Upasana was no new dilettantism,—it

meant the revolutionising (uprooting) of old ways of living and thinking, the overturning of the foundations of the old life. It meant for each Brahmo to become a missionary, as Keshab pointed out in his lecture, "The Destiny of Human Life,"—a missionary, a warrior, a covenanter.

Thus related and bound to their New Lord and God the whole Brahmo Samaj in Keshab's time was a Missionary and Apostolic Body so to say. With Keshab as the God-appointed Minister * there was no danger of relapsing into idolatry or atheism, the two rocks on which worshippers of Nirakara-Brahma are likely to split. In this new atmosphere we boys grew, and when we were young came to know Paramhansa Ramkrishna, a friend of Keshab. One by one most of us came to know him personally and some were more drawn than others. Of those most drawn to him I might name Hiranand and Nandalal. Hiranand was like the apple of his eye to Ramkrishna and Nandalal used to sing to him. In those days, 1880, I never heard of Vivekananda. I do not yet know if he was ever known by that name before the Parliament of Religions (1893). Now it must be remembered that we young men did not give up our God, our new Upasana and did not accept Ramkrishna's *Sadhan*. His *Samadhi* was an object of study to us. Instead of giving him up as a *buzrug* (charlatan) we, with Keshab, tried to profit by our intercourse with him. It ought to be remembered that

* Maharshi Debendranath got *adesh* from (was commanded by) God to appoint Keshab, Minister, Maharshi also said that God Himself initiated Keshab.—Autobiography of Maharshi, edited by Priya Nath Shastri, Second Edition, Appendix, pp. 16 and 7.

the thing which struck us most in him was his freedom from cant—not like ordinary *Sannyasi* or *Sadhu*, and Keshab who would not allow us to be called his (Keshab's) disciples, had shown a new way of approaching true Sadhus,—the new spiritual freedom for which he stood was seen in the Paramhansa too who hated with a deep hatred all pretensions to *Sadhugiri, Gurugiri.* That was one of the reasons why we took to him so naturally. This fact once forgotten will give birth to falsehoods without number.

True Brahmoism, such as Keshab believed in, developed into the New Dispensation.* And if there was the God of Truth in it from the beginning—one who was a Brahmo once and became something else afterwards—was perhaps not a true Brahmo at first. Those who professed to be such and yet became something afterwards—Bijoy Krishna Goswami, or Narendra Nath Sen or Narendra Nath Dutt (Swami Vivekananda) and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Did Goswami become Vaishnava (true), or Narendranath Sen Hindu, Buddhist or Theosophist, and Vivekananda Hindu, and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj *Vishudhha* Brahmos like Adi? The reverse of it. By ceasing to be a true Brahmo one ceases to be a true Hindu or Buddhist. The old eternal laws do not change. Eternal Providence has His own ways. And a Bijoy Krishna pretending to be more devout lost much of the new *bhakti* and played into the hands of spiritual quacks; so Narendranath Sen crying up a Vivekananda or crying down a Pratap Chandra, deceived himself and others; and Vivekananda too in

* Sitanath Tattwabhushaṇ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj admits it in his "My Debt to Keshab."

under the name of Vedanta taught things good, bad and indifferent; and poor Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was punished by being delivered into the hands of......in very unmistakable ways. There is no royal road to Euclid.— Not "many roads leading to the same goal" as the followers of Ramkrishna say, but *one* way only and that is the way of Divine Providence—the way followed by Keshab.

The true Brahmo is the practical Vedantist, and not he who has ceased to be a Brahmo—Vivekananda so long as he was a true Brahmo was a practical Vedantist.

The trials of 1874 opened deeper springs of life and thought in Keshab than we had noticed before. The *Sahaja Bhava* became more *sahaj*. He spoke to the brothers and sisters who had persecuted him about their special spiritual privileges as Brahmos,—and all these came by the grace of God—that they were spared the hardships of *Tirthabhraman* and saw God before them in their own homes, in their families. Was it not a privilege to be specially grateful for? "ঈশ্বর লাভ সহজ" (to find God is easy) was the burden of his নিবেদন (solicitation); he spoke on "ঈশ্বর ভিখারী" (God a beggar) at anniversary Upasana in the morning, and on "প্রমত্ত অবস্থা" (enraptured state) in the evening. This was in January 1875, and in March of the same year Divine Providence in His mysterious ways brought to him Ramkrishna of Dakshineshwar. If God had come to him unsought so often, and he taught this in season and out of season, making him very naturally a believer in His Grace, did he not also believe in the same Grace bringing to him unsought the friends whom his soul needed? "Every friend whom we......"—(Emerson.) Keshab's belief in

Providence was not the fruit of long processes of painful reasoning but natural as breathing. Ramkrishna used to speak of his *Sadhan,* his efforts to conquer lust and covetousness (কামিনী কাঞ্চন i.e. women and wealth) and noticed before long that Keshab was *Kripa Siddha* (কৃপাসিদ্ধ—attaining grace). The difference between Keshab and those who deserted him was something like that. They took to other ways of approaching God than the natural one, the new way, the more excellent way, the way of Navavidhan. "The highest effect of Art is to make new Artists" (Emerson).

How can the two be compared? Keshab was the message-bearer of a New Dispensation, gifted by the Divine Mother accordingly. Ramkrishna was a solitary *Sadhak* (সাধক), a *bhakta* long known to us as hating all publicity and *gurugiri* (গুরুগিরি). How suddenly he came to be the *Avatar* he was represented to be is still a mystery and Vivekananda, his chief disciple, is worshipped with Ramkrishna by their followings, and they know no other worship.

The new Art of Life of which Keshab was the chief (the Supreme) Artist had its students—and Pratap and Gour Govinda were students among his fellow-apostles. In the generation which followed, Hiranand and Nandalal were such students. Both of these were highly respected for their character by both young and old (both their compeers and elders as well as their youngers). But see how they kept to their New Ideal—reality and simplicity. The beauty of their character. No pretensions. If they read Emerson it was, not to be known as masters of their subject but, to live the one or two lessons they had learnt from him, not to read many pages but to

meditate on the meaning of one or two sentences and "chew and digest" it. What Keshab said in "Studies" in the *New Samhita* found its own students (disciples) among the youngmen of the new generation.

Has not the time come when the whole of the Youth of India and the world shouid have placed before it the character of Keshab Chandra Sen as the Ideal to be realised, as did Vice-Chancellor Reynolds, at the Convocation of Calcutta University in 1884? Let the address of Reynolds be reprinted and broadcasted in all our new Universities and old, and let the *Jeevan Veda* in English and the *True Faith* be circulated by thousands and lakhs all over the country and beyond. The time has come for such propaganda. In no profane spirit but as fellow-workers with Divine Providence, let us set about the business and push it on with all the zeal and enthusiasm which that Providence demands.

If every worker in the New Dispensation is not made conscious that he is একাই একশ (a hundred in one), he will not long continue as worker. Let him not depend at all on his own limited capacity, but on the unbounded resources of Infinite Providence let him rely.

Those alliterative Aphorisms of Nandalal in the "Sanctuary of Silence" will be most valued by those who want to practise the new art of life as taught by Keshab not by word of mouth but in deed. Indeed he could think, "speak and act with equal inspiration."

It was in March 1875 that Ramkrishna and Keshab met each other for the first time at the *Belghoria Tapoban* where the latter with his family and friends was living, to practise special spiritual exercises (সাধন). Let us see what new revelations Keshab was being blessed with

during his natural, congregational Upasanas. Besides the sermons ঈশ্বর ভিখারী (God a Beggar) and প্রমত্ত অবস্থা (enraptured state) delivered in January 24, 1875 (Magh 12), we find him speaking to his sisters in the faith, the *Brahmikas*, on the 13th Magh (25th January) about the special Grace of God which brought about that special Anniversary meeting:

"কেন শুনিলাম ব্রাহ্মসমাজ আসিয়াছে জগতের নারীদিগকে বাঁচাইবার জন্য ?"

"স্বর্গের কোন্ পথ দিয়া যাইয়া ঈশ্বরকে দেখিতে হয়, ইঁহারা জানিতেন না। এই জন্য ভগ্নিগণ, দয়াময় ঈশ্বর তোমাদের হাত ধরিয়া তোমাদিগকে এই উৎসবে আনিলেন।"

"নারীদিগের প্রতি তাঁহার এই বিশেষ দয়া" (Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. VI, pp. 133-134.)

"তাঁহার দর্শন বিনা আমাদের লেখাপড়া শেখা আমাদের বিষ হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। ভগ্নি! ব্রহ্মকন্যা! যদি তোমাকে বিশ্বাস করাইয়া দিতে পারি যে, তোমার প্রতি যথার্থই তোমার মার দয়া আছে, তুমি ইচ্ছা করিলেই তাঁহাকে দেখিতে পাইবে, তাহা হইলে আমার জীবন কৃতার্থ হয়।" (Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 135.)

"ভগ্নিগণ, বিশেষ সময় আসিয়াছে, আর বিলম্ব করিও না, তোমার মাকে দেখিতে বাহির হও।"

"যে একবার মাকে দেখিয়াছে, সে পাগলের মত হইয়াছে।" (Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 137.)

Translated into English:—

"Why I hear that Brahmo Samaj has come to save the woman class?"

"They did not know by following which path (to Heaven) one can see God. Therefore, oh sisters! the Merciful God has led you by hand to this *utsab* (anniversary)."

"He has special mercy for the woman class."

"Our education has turned into veritable poison, by not seeing Him (God). Sister! Daughter of Brahma! If I can convince you that the Mother has really mercy for you, and if you only want to see Her you would be able to do so, then my life will be deemed successful."

"Sisters! Special time has arrived, delay not—come out to see the Mother."

"One who has seen the Mother once, has become as if mad (intoxicated)."

After the above sermon comes a sermon on ইচ্ছাই ধর্ম্মের মূল (Will Is The Root Of Religious Spirit). That is a new interpretation of the function of the human will. Faith is the unseen power of man's will and with it he unites with the will of God, to create new worlds and work wonders in them.

Then follow three sermons on ব্রহ্মস্পর্শ (Touch of God) revealing the newness of the spiritual exercise which the new Upasana meant and the concluding on ত্রিবিধ যোগ (Three Schools of Yoga) is significant.

After his acquaintance with Ramkrishna, Keshab speaks of "গৃহবাসী বৈরাগী, জগদ্বাসী বৈরাগী and বৈরাগী পরিবার" ("Ascetic Householder", "Ascetic Living in the World", and "Ascetic Family").

29th November 1929

They (Ramkrishna and Keshab) were two different persons appointed by Divine Providence to different ends. Keshab's mother came of Shakta parents—his father and grandfather were Vaishnavas. Was he repeating what his grandfather and father taught or what he learnt from his mother? No. He must have imbibed certain things with his mother's milk as all children,—he must have inherited certain characteristics from his

father and grandfather,—but he was a new creation of the Divine Mother. His bringing up as a boy and a youngman was entirely different from that of Ramkrishna. Did Ramkrishna come into the world to repeat some old thing—*Adwaitabad* or the শাক্তধর্ম্ম (Shakta Dharma), etc.? If it was that, there was no need of his being. To speak of him as the *Avatar* of God in the nineteenth century—is it not the same thing as holding before us a new monster? The age of miracles—meaning violations of the laws of God—continues after all that Carlyle wrote on Natural Supernaturalism?

Mysterious are the ways of God. It was in His mind to bring together two souls of different complexions and unite them as friends, as lovers. How Ramkrishna felt towards Keshab was often expressed by him in words, similes too sacred too deep to be profanely interpreted. Those who profess to be his followers have, by ignoring the part played by Keshab in his life, given us a character which is not historically true and is spiritually false and superfluous. Keshab knew better than anyone else in his generation how to extract from others what was good in them, what was divine in the midst of what was human. And this is not because of his training in college or at home but by the direct action of God's grace. The time has come when we must not let ourselves be deceived with unmeaning superlatives—or German or French phrases.

We youngmen were drawn to Ramkrishna—not because of his fits of *Samadhi* but because of his being, like Keshab, a tremendously real man. He hated *Gurugiri* as he did the trade of a woman of evil fame! In his talks Paramhansa always likened one to the other.

And if his followers tell us today that he changed in that respect they are responsible for presenting to the world a different character.

What is practical Vedanta? In the history of our country if it is the Buddhists who reigned for centuries, were they not better practical Vedantists than the Hindus who called them atheists, thieves, etc.? And if the Mohammedans and Moghuls ruled the country for many centuries more, were not the *Mlechchas* (contemptuous term used for non-Hindus) better practical Vedantists than those who professed or pretended to be such among the Hindus? Then when the Europeans came to rule over us and Christian Missions came with them why did thousands and lakhs of our people embrace Christianity? Was it not because they found more humanity in the missionaries than in their own Brahmins? There also practical Vedanta was found more among these *Mlechchas* than among Hindus. The teaching in the Gita was practised more and better by the London Policemen than by many a Hindu philosopher. All this ought to be acknowledged with shame to ourselves and gratefulness to Providence. Instead of that what did Vivekananda do? Extolled he knew not what. And even today after so much noisy demonstrations a Gandhi and a Nehru find themselves face to face with such tremendous difficulties as regards "untouchability" that all political progress is retarded.

After the Christian missionaries, it is the missionaries of the Brahmo Samaj (the New Dispensation) who have practised the teaching of the Vedanta; whereas those who have advertised themselves as missionaries of the Vedanta have shown no such moral courage. In spite

of all their euphuism about দরিদ্র নারায়ণ (the poor man is God) can they show such records of সেবা (serving humanity) as the Catholics and the Salvationists show? "Pretension never Christianised the world."

I who go by faces never knew among the youngmen who used to visit the Paramhansa Ramkrishna, having been introduced to him by Keshab, two better faces than those of Hiranand and Nandalal, both very dear to Ramkrishna. In their faces one could see reflected something of the beauty of Ramkrishna's face. In their words and acts there was that which spoke of their habitual converse with the Unseen, the Holy God. In Hiranand's face, after death, one could see something of the grace of Ramkrishna. If face answers to face, his face answers to Ramkrishna's better than any other youngman's. Narendra Dutt (afterwards known as Swami Vivekananda) was not known among his compeers for spiritual beauty (grace) or innocence. Cleverness and smartness characterised him (Vivekananda).

In practical Vedanta what is known as Philanthropy? Is it self-effacement or self-advertisement which has characterised the works of the Ramkrishna Mission? The last occasion was the flood in Northern Bengal, and Swami Saradananda came in collision with Sir P. C. Roy. When we organised the relief operations on the occasion of the Burdwan Floods (of 1913), did not our workers come in contact with workers of the Ramkrishna Mission and report the spirit of brag in their সেবা (service)? "All human work is transitory, small in itself, contemptible; only the worker thereof and the spirit that dwelleth in him are significant."

It was because Keshab was more honest than the

rest of his older and younger contemporaries that he did not take counsel with flesh and blood but with the Holy Spirit of God in a matter so all-important as the marriage of his daughter. It was an act of moral courage showing the fibre of which the new man was made. He has shown, more and better than any other, that a new earth and a new heaven is being made for us and we are fellow-workers with God in His new creation. "Faith is direct Vision." "It beholdeth God and beholdeth Immortality." "Faith is a new creation." "The faith that regenerates individuals and nations." With Keshab have come new problems and their new solutions. A new India begins with him. How is he to get on in a world which he believes is God's world—and who is blessed with the direct vision of God, and with the direct knowledge of His purposes? Let anyone read জয়লাভ (victory) in *Jeevan Veda* and he will see Cash and not Credit is his rule in Spiritual Business, meaning thereby that he is not to depend on *Shastras* and *Gurus* for the light which is to guide him in all hours and moments of his life. Conservatism must be living and growing something; if not, of what use is it? Is he to look for light and guidance in the current Hinduism of his time—that in which his parents believed? When the Voice within said, "No, explore new Americas" how could he sit still with folded hands, as having nothing to add to what his forefathers gathered? If he was not a nonentity, a piece of wood or stone, but a living soul, he must grow and his growth must be seen in the society in which he lives.

If the Ayurveda be the fifth Veda—the *Jeevan Veda* is the sixth Veda—New India's new offering to the new

world. The New Veda is the Vade-Mecum of the New Reformer of New India—at once his "Guide, Philosopher and Friend."

The বিংশ শতাব্দী of চিরঞ্জীব শর্ম্মা (*Twentieth Century* by Chiranjib Sharma) should be read by all Nationalists, National Congress 'Pandas' (Leaders) and by all Brahmos, specially those who celebrated the Centenary of the Brahmo Samaj.

Was Ramkrishna a stark Vedantist? We seldom heard him use Vedantic phrases. One who had found the Divine Mother after much সাধন (religious exercise) and Her কৃপা (grace) and *was afraid to lose what he had found* by too much intercourse with men and more with women, he avoided both, the latter more than the former, and again and again warned those who wanted to be his disciples against intimacy with women. I do not know when he ceased to warn thus. I have seen other Hindu saints, Paramhansas, but Ramkrishna was not like these. Paramhansa Sivnarain Swami (to whom I was introduced a few years after Ramkrishna's death) who was looked up to by some well-educated people as God in the flesh told me he did not find Ramkrishna, when he happened to meet him at the Dakshineshwar temple, of like mind with him, not ভাবের ভাবুক (of similar contemplative turn of mind and feeling); and I hear the followers of Ramkrishna do not make much of Swami Bhola Giri who died lately at Hardwar and who had followers who were counted by a hundred thousand. I knew him too.

Then there were Bhaskaranand Swami and Bishuddhananda Swami at Benares. None of these was like Ramkrishna. Indeed if Ramkrishna loved Christ, Paramhansa

Sivnarain Swami almost caricatured the idea of God as Father and Christ as the Son of God.

ALLAHABAD, *6th December, 1929.*

The Paramhansa (Ramkrishna) has yet to be shown. Keshab's message carried by Pratap loses much of its simplicity, originality, and directness. So Ramkrishna's life differs from Vivekananda's presentation of it—St. Paul preaching "Christ crucified". Vivekananda's Vedantism—compare Sarkar's, Ramanuja's, Madhava's Vedantism.

ALLAHABAD, *8th December, 1929.*

Upadhyaya Gour Gobind's account of the first meeting of Ramkrishna with Keshab at Belghoria *tapoban* তপোবন (spiritual retreat) is historically more reliable than P. C. Mazumdar's account in the "Life and Teachings of K. C. Sen".

Yesterday read (again) Upadhyaya's "কেশবচন্দ্রে ব্রহ্মস্বরূপের সাম্রাজ্য" (the kingdom of God in Keshab Chandra) and "Keshab the Reconciler of Pure Hinduism and Pure Christianity"—and this morning শ্রীচৈতন্য ও কেশবচন্দ্র (Sri Chaitanya and Keshab Chandra). These Bengali addresses ought to be immediately translated into English and into other European languages—especially now that men like Romain Rolland have begun to write again of the influence of Ramkrishna on Keshab. What a mine of saving knowledge is in Gour Gobind's expositions of Keshab—surpassing all that was published before him! And Troilokyanath's other writings than কেশব-চরিত (Life of Keshab) have so many portraits of Keshab in them. These have to be collected and shown together—there is a whole wide sea of work before us—the new students of the New Dispensation.

How his (Keshab's) prophecies have been fulfilled! One by one, one after another, so many left him among his "followers" as the world would call them. Bijoy Krishna and Narendranath Sen were the first to show the way—how both of them became, the one a *Guru*, the other the President of the Theosophical Society. And Shivnath Shastri and Shivnath Agnihotri became leaders of different movements. Among the new generation of followers—those who were of my age—Narendra Dutt became more known than others as the chief disciple of Ramkrishna. But what a difference between Keshab and these followers! *He was always learning and therefore a teacher*. The followers had not the patience or the humility to be taught—they appeared before others as teachers (especially *Vivekananda* and *Agnihotri*). Keshab like his predecessors, Debendranath and Ram Mohan, had to fight his way through difficulties and obstacles caused by his own people—heroes all three—not appearing such before others—*but proved themselves such at home*—and before they were known in distant England they (Ram Mohan and Keshab) had been known as Reformers in their own.—What a sore fight both of them had.

Of Keshab we all know how he resisted the temptation. "If thou wilt fall down and worship etc."—When he was a youngman of 22 to 24, the Acharya of the then Brahmo Samaj wanted to make him his successor—and there were so many experienced people against the choice. It was such an Utsab—that ordination of Keshab! But it was a "rejoicing with trembling." He was put in that high position by Debendranath who thought him fit—indeed the fittest person for it. But

see how he comported himself.—Then when he separated from the Maharshi and had the best youngmen as his "followers"—through what trials were they led to Monghyr! And then what new trials for Keshab again! The old temptation in a new form. "He is Christ come again." "He is Chaitanya come again." "No, no; in him we find Christ and Chaitanya beautifully united." And should anyone doubt this, let him be anathema! "ভক্তের অপমান সইতে পারব না" (Won't be able to tolerate the insult of devotees) and Bijoy Goswami, etc., found it not safe to be with these *bhaktas* of Keshab. Keshab was 30 when all this took place—and when two years after he visited England, not as a *Swami* or in any other form—but as the old Babu Keshab Chandra Sen—what lionising!

ALLAHABAD, *9th December, 1929.*

Upendra Krishna Gupta wrote in the 'Interpreter and the Youngman'—on Max Muller's article—"A Real Mahatma." Upendra among us was noted for his fidelity to facts, separating myths from truths. Like Mahendra Gupta and Nagendra Gupta he too used to visit the Paramhansa at Dakshineshwar—he a more reliable chronicler of events than the other two.

When the two friends (Keshab and Ramkrishna) were living, was the question ever raised as to who was greater? Yes; Baladev, "যিনি পেটে কথা রাখতে পারতেন না" (who could not keep anything to himself, but gave it out) once asked Keshab such a curious question—and received for answer the characteristic reply that they had different missions and should not be compared. This once seen will show how entirely irrelevant things have been brought into the discussion. If the question simply was—how much the one learnt from the other—who

could tell it excepting God Himself? From Keshab's standpoint one could easily say that he was always learning, and learnt all that God gave him to learn from Ramkrishna, and as regards Ramkrishna we used to hear so many things said by him regarding Keshab's influence over him. These things, strange to say, have almost been ignored by his so-called disciples. In the relation between the two what was current coin disappeared altogether after a Vivekananda appeared on the scene. Did not Ramkrishna compare himself to a small country boat (ডিঙ্গি) while Keshab was like a big ship? Himself like a palm tree (তালগাছ) while Keshab was like বট (banyan tree) giving shade to so many. As a solitary সাধক (devotee) Ramkrishna was blessed with spiritual riches, while Keshab was a গৃহস্থ (householder) living in a palatial building in the heart of the biggest city in India, with many and varied engagements; and yet how the blessings with which he (Keshab) was blessed were not of earth, but of heaven. Keshab's mother was to Paramhansa like the mother of Sri Krishna, the mother of Sri Chaitanya. Any man introducing himself as belonging to Keshab's fold was so welcome to Ramkrishna.

ALLAHABAD, *10th December, 1929.*

Reading Girish Chandra Sen's short life of Ramkrishna last evening—how sweet—and coming from the 'Maulvi' of Navavidhan—uncompromising in his attitude.

Who is responsible for bringing together in contrast a Keshab and a Ramkrishna—both imaginary concoctions?

The true Ramkrishna and the true Keshab have been lost to our view, these more than forty years—and the controversy ought to come to an end.

Begin with the last visit of Ramkrishna to Keshab.

A study of Keshab's utterances in 1874 and the beginning of 1875 reveals his সহজ ভাব (easy ecstatic mood) and resorting in his trials to the Divine Mother's bosom. If the Cooch Behar marriage agitation of 1878 *upset* many things established by Providence with the help of His instruments, Keshab and his devoted fellow-workers,—and Keshab had to reinstate these in their proper places—the trials of 1874 in connection with the ভারত-আশ্রম *(Bharat-Asram)* described as অগ্নিপরীক্ষা (Baptism with Fire) by G. G. Roy drove him to Hazaribagh and his mother-heart yearned mightily for the company of the brothers and sisters in the New Faith—and in his disappointment, how he wept for them. The vision of God as Mother gave him the heart of a mother! "বন্ধুগণ, তোমাদের সেবা করিতে গিয়া রোগী হইয়াছি etc........." (Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. VI, p. 121); "মাকে না দেখিলে যে ,আর সুখ নাই। ভগ্নিগণ, বিশেষ সময় আসিয়াছে আর বিলম্ব করিও না, তোমরা মাকে দেখিতে বাহির হও।" (Ibid., p. 137).

"Friends, in labouring to serve you, I have become an invalid, etc." (p. 121).

"There is no happiness without seeing the Mother. Sisters, come on to see the Mother—delay not" (p. 137).

These words were addressed to his sisters—that is, the sisters must not be left out in the new joys of beholding the Mother.

And on succeeding Sundays having spoken on ব্রহ্মস্পর্শ, প্রণাম and ত্রিবিধ যোগ ("Touch of God," "Bowing to God," and "Three Sorts of *Yoga*") he spoke under "ভক্ত দয়াবান্ কর্ম্মী" as follows: "প্রবল বেগে প্রেমের স্রোত আসিতেছে। সমুদ্রের তরঙ্গ, কোথায় থাকে স্বার্থপরতা?" (p. 177).—(With profound force the flow of love is rushing—veritable waves of the ocean—how long the selfishness can stand?)

On the 14th March 1875, he spoke on বৈরাগী ঈশ্বর (Ascetic God)—"যদি প্রকৃত বৈরাগী হইতে চাই, তবে পিতার দৃষ্টান্ত অনুকরণ করিতেই হইবে।" (p. 185). (If I want to be a real ascetic, I must follow the example of the Father.)

Under the heading বৈরাগী পরিবার (Ascetic Householder) he speaks (21st March 1875)—"কবে সেই দিন হইবে, যখন ব্রাহ্ম সন্ন্যাসিগণ, etc........." (p. 193). (When that day will come when Brahmo *Sannyasis*, etc.)

Then on March 28th he speaks of স্বর্গীয় প্রেম (Heavenly Love)—"যদি এই প্রেমের আস্বাদন না পাইতাম, etc........." (p. 207). (Had I not tasted this heavenly love, etc.)

And if he had met Ramkrishna sometime in March—here is what he says under heading সুখের বৈরাগ্য—"ব্রাহ্মগণ! যদি এই বৈরাগ্য সাধন করিতে চাও, তবে জীবনে বৈরাগ্য ও অনুরাগ সাধন কর" (p. 213). ("Blissful Asceticism":—Ye Brahmos! If you want to practise this *vairagya*, then practise in your life asceticism and devotion.)

From what they have written about the Ramkrishna Mission it would appear that the life and example of Ramkrishna drew to a life of self-consecration Vivekananda and others who saw the Master,—and after them still many others who never saw Ramkrishna nor Vivekananda.

That Ramkrishna was an original man (character) there is no doubt. Let him stand before the world as he was—and the light of Heaven show him in its true light. Why allow myths to grow about him in the light of the present day? If truth is stronger than fiction—the real Ramkrishna will come out better, the less there is myth about him.

The question that confronts the spiritual psychologist is—Was not Ramkrishna influenced in more ways than

one by contact with Keshab than his so-called followers would be prepared to admit? First who showed the way to a right appreciation of the Saint's worth not only to his fellow-apostles like Pratap Chandra and Troilokya Nath—but to younger men like Hiranand and Nandalal—and these latter included afterwards Vivekananda and others.

Let history not be perverted. If it is true that it was Keshab who taught us to be taught by Ramkrishna's example—it is true also as Bhai Priyanath says that Vivekananda and his party came later than we under the influence of the Saint. It has to be remembered that Keshab when he introduced Christ's name into the Brahmo Samaj had to part company with Debendranath, that when he introduced *Sankirtan* with *Khol* and *Kartal*, Pratap Chandra and others kept away, and Keshab had to wait for sometime before his fellow-missionaries fell in with his love for Chaitanya as thus practically shown —*And which new (bold) act of Keshab but had its protestors?*

Was it an easy task to take his wife to Debendranath's place in 1862? Was it an easy thing to travel to Bombay and Madras in 1864 unbefriended by any? And when the separation took place between the old Debendranath and the young Keshab, was it without protest that Christ and Chaitanya found acceptance among the new Brahmos? And at Monghyr with the blessings of *bhakti*; what new trials tried this new *bhakta*? Then when he returned from England and the Indian Reform Association was started—what tremendous activity in all departments! The 'Bharat Asram' showed Heaven on Earth—but the trials which it brought—how severe! Study him

before and after those trials and say if the Infinite Unseen was not becoming more and easily realizable to him—"Sweeter than Honey and Brighter than Sunbeam." Remember all these trials and the triumphs which followed before he met Ramkrishna. And their first meeting, as recorded by Pratap and Gour Gobinda and others, shows that if Keshab and Ramkrishna loved each other at first sight, it was not so with those who are called his followers. And if the older men were one by one converted to his view, the younger ones were not. And if Hiranand and Nandalal were easily drawn, not so easily Vivekananda etc. The whole atmosphere was changed by Keshab's attitude—or how could rationalist Brahmos sit at the feet of Ramkrishna? Had Keshab held aloof like Debendranath and Dayanand, what would have become of us all? At every step of his life Keshab had to overcome new difficulties. In the Paramhansa's case we found exactly some of those things which we had loved and admired in Keshab—that intense love of Reality, hatred of sham, গৈরিক (yellow robe), etc.

Explain (how will you?) the Paramhansa's change of attitude with regard to making disciples—that he had a mission and he wanted missionaries to carry that mission abroad—all this we had not seen in him *so long as Keshab lived*.

The conclusion (answer) forced on one is that it was his friendship with Keshab which brought out these ideas in him. He who avoided both woman and wealth, found among his first disciples men like Swami Vivekananda who plunged at once into the civilization which honoured both. How could he wish for disciples at all when he compared the so-called *Gurus* to prostitutes? Was not a

new sense created in him by Keshab as it were? Was not the path which was still overrun with thorns made passable by Keshab? So long as we knew him during Keshab's lifetime—the Dakshineshwar Saint, we never knew that he was anxious for disciples, that he had a message, etc. For whenever any among us asked for advice on matters of conscience, etc., he referred him to Keshab saying "ও সব ঐ আধারে" (it is Keshab's province). —How did he change so soon his attitude and not only made disciples but allowed them to change their dress, etc.? How he hated people who put on the *Garua* (yellow robe) day and night showing their superiority to ordinary men. He never used *Garua* himself. And he who warned all people and Keshab too against courting the company of women, how the Divine Mother Herself took him out of his solitary cell (room) and brought him into the midst of women—reformed by the New Faith of the New Dispensation? Was it not a *lila* of that Mother when, learning that Keshab was with the new sisters performing the *varan* in connection with the *Maghotsab* I believe, he insisted on being taken inside—and into their midst—and both he and Keshab holding each other's hands began to dance saying (singing) "আমরা মায়ের মা আমাদের" (we are Mother's and Mother is ours). In the New Bhagvat of the New Dispensation this will be recorded by *New bhaktas* in the proper way (manner of Bhagvat or Scripture).

There is such a thing as *foolhardiness*. Ramkrishna was not foolhardy in the two matters of contact with woman (কামিনী) and wealth (কাঞ্চন). He knew the danger of being influenced by either—and having warned Keshab, among others, against allowing women to have

their part in society, how could he wish to be taken where they were having *Varan*, etc.? It was not foolhardiness. There was the gentle leading of the Holy Spirit of the New Dispensation, and had he kept to his own ideal of a solitary holy life—a life of self-conquest, conquest of lust and greed (কাম ক্রোধ)—he would not have at all *advanced* in his friendship with Keshab in a new direction. But he did not give up cautiousness. It was in company with Keshab that he came to know our women—and how safe he was there.

Here I would say a word to my brethren of the Ramkrishna Mission—Distinguish between moral courage and foolhardiness. In Keshab's company Vivekananda and others were safe like us. But without it—all that they have preached, etc.—has it not increased foolhardiness? Both Ramkrishna and Keshab were such simple and sincere lovers of the Divine Mother, that anything in our attitude which militates against this simplicity and sincerity in their love—is an offence against that Divine Mother, the gravity of which will become more and more apparent, the more of Her grace illumines our souls. Their friendship—how sweetly human—how deliciously sweet—as between lover and beloved—between Radha and Krishna.

ALLAHABAD, *13th December, 1929.*

When Keshab was emerging out of the অগ্নি পরীক্ষা (fire ordeal) in Bharat Asram, among the blessings which awaited him were *(a)* more *nearness* to the Divine Being, *(b)* more সহজ ভাব (easy ecstatic mood), *(c)* more of the Mother's ভাব (motherliness), *(d)* more of the বিধান (ideal of Dispensation). And then came Ramkrishna of Dakshineshwar. In 1876 Keshab was giving lessons in *Yoga*

and *Bhakti, Jnan* and *Seba*. Had he lost his balance by his friendship with Ramkrishna?

ALLAHABAD, *14th December, 1929.*

The *Jeevan Veda* rightly read will discover a New Age—new in so many new senses. The New Man of the New Dispensation represents this New Age—Prayer in a new Sense—Sense of Sin—new. Fire Baptism: Spiritual Freedom: Yoga and Bhakti—essentially new. A New *Discipleship*.

Democracy and liberty and other profane catchwords are being converted into new ideas of At-one-ment and Oneness.

Two of Gour Gobinda Roy's Annual Discourses—how illuminating! The question of their mutual influence on each other of Keshab and Ramkrishna appears in a new light. Let it be seen in the light of God which is given and not found to order.

Keshab had created a New India when Ramkrishna appeared on the scene. And it was the purpose of Providence that they two together would be fellowworkers with Him in His work of recreating India and the world—the one without the other would not henceforth do. Keshab had struck out new lines of work in so many directions. If his realisation of God as Mother was helped by his contact with Ramkrishna, it must be remembered that *the method of Keshab's realisation was different*. *Were not the contents different too?* With Keshab it was *seeing* God as Mother as She *revealed* Herself to him. It was God-Vision: and he invited the whole world to share it with him. "God-Vision in the nineteenth century" (see "Brahmananda's Broadcasting"). His সাধন (Sadhan) was সজন (in company with

others) more than নির্জ্জন (solitary) and his lecture on "The Destiny of Human Life" and the missionary tours in Bombay and Madras were all meant to rouse the whole country to a new sense of its divine destiny. There was Divine Providence working out His purposes through him. And if it was today the elite of Calcutta from the Governor-General to the clerk of his office crowding to his sermon—tomorrow it was the masses who joined in the *Nagar kirtan*. What was not possible in Ram Mohan's time became possible in Debendranath's—what was not possible in Debendranath's time became possible in Keshab's. And what was not possible in Keshab's time is possible in ours. That Swami Vivekananda carried the message of Ramkrishna, as they say, to America showed that a new Hinduism was being born as it were. Whoever heard of such a thing in the old order? Those who talk glibly of Vivekananda going there as a Hindu,—had they touched his spirit and body would have found something different from what they had imagined. If Ramkrishna was not like an ordinary Sannyasin, Vivekananda was not like an ordinary Hindu. Much has been changed in the inner and outer atmosphere of our country and the world when we were born into it. Vivekananda preaching in America seemed a phenomenon (a giant)—back to Calcutta, his first speech proved his last, how disappointing! Those who had built big hopes how disappointed! What does that show? Had he a real message? *After* the New Dispensation could he or anyone else have any New Message? That is a serious question.

Why all the deliberate ignoring, belittling of Keshab and his people—and why all the vilifying? Like the

Sadharan Brahmo Samaj people, was there not plenty of unscrupulous propaganda? When Keshab died in January 1884, the New Dispensation was the grandest Reality (মূর্তিমান) in his life—"a *complete* dispensation" (see "Lectures"). No need for anyone else to make it more complete so to say. All these hymns which Troilokyanath composed up to that date (8th January, 1884) were they not like a complete body of scripture containing so many spiritual pictures of Keshab? * All these were there before Ramkrishna began to have disciples—and long before Vivekananda claimed for him the unique honour of *Avatar*. Even many of Gour Gobinda Roy's illuminating addresses had been delivered.

What was Keshab's experience in England? (See page 572 of "আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র, মধ্যবিবরণ"—Acharya Keshab Chandra—Middle Part)—The women there how like one's mother and sisters. And what did Vivekananda find in America? Something he had *not* found in his own country.

ALLAHABAD, *18th December, 1929.*

If the year 1874 was a year of special trial অগ্নি-পরীক্ষা (Fire Baptism) how Keshab emerged out of it—a more confirmed man of Faith (direct vision), of *Bhakti* (new). If he could not take part in the *Bhadrotsav* of this year and had to spend the time at Hazaribagh how his

* We remember that when the S. B. Samaj people in 1878 separated from Keshab, they boasted that they would keep the Brahmo religion pure (বিশুদ্ধ) and they call their party the progressive (in what respect?) party. Whether their boastings were justified or whether they have *spiritually* progressed, let posterity judge. For doing so they are recommended to study and compare the New Dispensation literature with that of the S. B. Samaj since 1878.

mother-heart yearned for his sisters and brothers—(or spiritual children *). And when he came back what fresh exhortations were those weekly sermons of his to *see* the Unseen, to love the Nirakar.

"সামান্য রূপ ঈশ্বর দর্শন হইলে হইবে না, নিঃসন্দেহ দর্শন চাই; কেবল নিঃসন্দেহ দর্শন হইলেও হইবে না, সুমিষ্ট দর্শন চাই, আবার কেবল সুমিষ্ট দর্শন হইলেও হইবে না, কিন্তু পূর্ণ মত্তভার দর্শন চাই।" (Acharyer Upadesh, Vol. VI, p. 46—27th September, 1874.)

"অরূপ-রূপ-দর্শন—এ যে আশ্চর্য্য কথা!" (p. 56).

Seeing God in the ordinary way won't do—the seeing must be free from doubt—even that won't do—the seeing must be sweet—even that won't do—the seeing must be as if of full intoxication (madness) (p. 46). Seeing the beauty of the Formless,—it is a very strange thing indeed!—(p. 56).

ALLAHABAD, *19th December, 1929.*

Dhan Gopal Mukherji writes of Ramkrishna and his disciples under the title "The Face of Silence". Romain Rolland seems to have got some of his knowledge of the same from him. *But how is one to distinguish fact from fiction in the stories which books like these contain?* Who is Dhan Gopal? A Bengali, one would suppose. And yet he knows so little of Keshab and Pratap? (see page 89: "Attracted by such words of praise from a fellow-Brahmo (Pratap) of importance, Keshab at last paid Ramkrishna a visit." †)

How are all those Movements rising out of or in

* Acharya Keshab Chandra, Centenary Edition, p. 1007.

† Even the Ramkrishna-followers admit that Ramkrishna sought Keshab's acquaintance and went to see him at the Belghoria Garden in March 1875.

antagonism to the Brahmo Samaj associated with Keshab to be characterized? There are the following—*(a)* The Arya Samaj, *(b)* The Theosophical Society, *(c)* The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, *(d)* Bijoy Krishna Goswami Sect, *(e)* Dev Samaj of Shivnarain Agnihotri, *(f)* The Ramkrishna-Vivekananda Society, *(g)* Radha Swami Cult, etc.

WHERE HAS EACH LED ITS FOLLOWERS AND (OR) LEADS TO?

(a) The Arya Samaj, purporting to be based on the Vedas, drifted into Dayanand's interpretation of them, and the *Arya Dharma*—Can they leave these scriptures to be studied and accepted or rejected according to Divine Light?

(b) The Theosophical Society of Bengal had for its President Babu Narendranath Sen, a cousin of Keshab. Leaving (deserting) him and the Brahmo Samaj (of K.) did he find peace in the alien movement? It was a Russian lady who was then guiding tha Movement. How she led Babu Narendra by the nose!

(c) By whom was the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj founded?...... Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

(d) Was it B. K. Goswami? How he, too, was put in the place of God! If it was S. N. Shastri, did he not confess that he had led his Brahmo Samaj to a "wrong track" in his Diary of September 5, 1903? *

(e) And how easily was God set aside by S. N. Agnihotri to make room for himself?

* *Vide* page 273 of "Life of Shiva Nath Shastri," by his daughter Hemlata Devi. (First Ed.)

(f) In the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda Movement the three objects of worship, I am told, are Ramkrishna, his wife and Vivekananda.

(g) Is the Radha Swami Movement anything better? "Licking spits" as ***Prasad, Thuk Panthi.***

None of the above gives us the Living God of the New Dispensation—but some human or some other substitute for the same.

ALLAHABAD, *20th December, 1929.*

So many things had already become settled facts in his own and his country's life before Keshab met Ramkrishna. The annual sermon on "Behold the Light of Heaven in India" was delivered in January 1875 just two months before the meeting with the Paramhansa. And what a significant proclamation of faith in that sermon. Let it be studied again and again from as many points of view as the subject suggests. The wording of it is full of new meanings as Shirazi the Bahai pointed out. THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN IN INDIA—BEHOLD—Every word expressive of a new vision. And how this Light was to him the most sublime Reality—the Light with which the faces of his brothers and sisters were daily lighted in their ***Upasana*** (worship of the Spirit-God)! He with them had already become lights of their country—"the city set on a hill" *(cf.* "You are the lights of the world"). They had seen together this Light of Heaven in their daily worship—their daily life—and knew that this Light was illumining the India of their day. Were they not blessed because of this knowledge? Keshab did not confound the age-long darkness in which he saw his country enveloped with this New Light—but while deploring the one rejoiced

at the other. The Light was shining in the darkness—he saw it better than anyone else—and when he came to know Paramhansa did he renounce his living faith in the Spirit-God and become converted to the latter's faith in a visible image? He did not suddenly become a mystic. But if he was one in 1880 he was a mystic in 1860 when he wrote "Young Bengal"; he was a mystic in 1865 when he wrote "True Faith"; he was a mystic in 1868 the year of the Monghyr Revival, and in 1870 when he visited England; and after his return when he started the "INDIAN REFORM ASSOCIATION". What was the BHARAT ASRAM in 1872 and the years following?

Rightly studied the *Sangat* was a MYSTIC FRATERNITY—"Face answering to face—heart answering to heart." Those meetings were organised by the Unseen Spirit of God—the God of Conscience—the Holy Spirit. These youngmen were brought together by their Unseen Friend—the Inward Monitor—and there they discussed questions of practical importance—how faith can be carried out in the daily concerns of life. These informal gatherings cemented an inward friendship whose জমাট (cementing) found outward expression at different periods in later life (their later history) in the Monghyr Revival, the philanthropic activites in connection with the INDIAN REFORM ASSOCIATION, in the Bharat Asram, and then in the Cooch Behar Marriage agitation, and lastly, in the New Dispensation.

The gains of each period were distinctly marked (the lessons learnt) in Keshab's history and the history of his community—the two going together. In the Sangat নীতি (ethics) was developed. Conscience—a pure conscience for every individual member—meant a community then

forming which must have a keen conscience. And the Prophet whose life and example most appealed to them was Jesus Christ—a sort of spiritual friendship of personal relationship with him was being formed. The keenness of conscience as well as friendship with Jesus, both marked characteristics in their inward life, and when the time came they found outward expression. All the friendship with Debendranath, all the love and reverence he commanded would not prevent their allegiance to a greater Friend—one who having conquered the West by his love was coming to conquer the East, the place of his birth; and in India in the nineteenth century he (Jesus) had made his footfalls heard in the days of Ram Mohan Roy—and in the days of Keshab was to sweep away like a deluge, age-long sins and iniquities. "Every inch of this man is real, tremendously real", said Keshab of himself—and here was a Person, nineteen centuries old, whose life and example, words and actions shook him as nothing else did. And the Person, his Words and Acts entered into his life and character by their own force as it were to become incorporated into them.

So by the *Sangat* they made history. It gave them *(a)* keen conscience individually, *(b)* unitedly a community or social conscience, *(c)* Jesus making the conscience clearer. All this, however, latent during their friendship with Debendranath became patent when the time came. When Debendranath said, "Thus far and no further" and they heard the Voice "Onward, forward, heavenward": see "Destiny of Human Life", "True Faith" etc., তিনযুদ্ধ (Three Battles). With the severing of old ties of friendship new ties of friendship were formed. After Christ came Chaitanya.

These conscientious Brahmos having বিশ্বাস, বিবেক and বৈরাগ্য (faith, conscience and asceticism) were to pass through severe inward trials, struggles, etc., landing them in a desert of doubt. At last there came the Goddess of *Bhakti* ("ভক্তি দেবী"): see কেশব-চরিত *(Keshab Charit)*. It was a new *Bhakti* and a new Chaitanya who came to them. The old 'Brahma' of the Brahmos revealed Himself not at first as *Hari* or মা (Mother) but as দয়াময় (the Merciful), as পতিত-পাবন (the Purifier of the fallen). This has to be remembered by all students and this ভক্তি *Bhakti* not to be confounded with what took place in Chaitanya's time and what is taking place in হরি-সভা *(Hari-Sabhas)* after Keshab's introduction of the same among 'educated' people. It pleased Divine Providence to touch the hearts of these Brahmos in a new manner. The thrilling experiences of a new love of God and a new love of man as brother upset unbalanced minds, but Keshab came out of them a better man in every respect—the joys which Heaven blessed him with as well as the trials which came with them gave to his whole character new tints of beauty and these failed not to come out when he stood again before mixed audiences in India or in England. It was his face which drew people as nothing else did. In the Monghyr days some of those who watched him closely said, "This is Sri Chaitanya come again"—others "No, this is Christ"—still others, "In him we find both Christ and Chaitanya beautifully blended." They were not wrong; for the নীতি (ethics) of Sangat followed by the ভক্তি *Bhakti* of Monghyr, did it not mean Christ followed by Chaitanya (Chaitanya coming after Christ)? The Adi Brahmo Samaj had already accused him of too much reverence

for Christ—the Shantipur Vaishnavas had melted over his discourse on Chaitanya shortly before the happenings at Monghyr. Both had possessed him. The thing to be noted in this connection is that it was the Brahmo Keshab who showed such allegiance to Christ that Christians hoped he would soon be baptised and enter their fold. It was the 'Christian' Keshab who was honoured in Shantipur. And he who had thus been possessed by Christ and Chaitanya when he visited England—did they not see in his face the face of Christ—he a better Christian than those who professed that name? An invisible Providence was making a new history of India and it was a Brahmo who was chosen to show how Christ and Chaitanya might be united in the character of a modern Indian (Hindu). Not one of these facts can be ignored without ignoring the *lila* of a living God.

Keshab's visit to England showed him many things—the English people at home somewhat different from what they are known to be abroad. English homes he could not forget. Christian charity—what Christ had made of the men and women, Christ and Mary—the women workers in philanthropy suggested new possibilities in woman's character. "Chastity, thy name is woman" instead of Frailty. Difference between fashionable European ladies and Holy Sisters of Mercy—the one not to be confounded with the other. When Pratap Chandra speaks of the Paramhansa's reverence for women as the opposite of the European idea—he did not bring into comparison those Christian women in whose face one could see the face of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The history of these nineteen centuries—not a blank, or filled with stories of what was bloodshed only—but of heroic

and holy lives of men and women—not known to the public (the world) as "hid with Christ in God". How is it that, one after another, our distinguished men have found more to love and admire in English and American women who proved such sisters and mothers to them—Ram Mohan Roy and Miss Castle and Miss Carpenter, Keshab Chandra Sen and Misses Sharpe, Collet and Cobbe? It would not do to say that Ramkrishna taught us how to look on women. Centuries of Catholic history record, so many pure and beautiful lives—and even today the sisters of the Salvation Army have such a heavenly look—that to speak of woman as tempting man to sin shows how far behind we are in the progress of civilization. Woman is there to bless man, raise him by divine love to a higher level where woman more than man will be seen to have been made in the image of God.

The philanthropic activities in connection with the *Indian Reform Association* must not be confounded with similar activities in connection with similarly named Associations. There is a difference in spirit. Filled with the spirit of Christ and Chaitanya—and having seen in the lives of holy English women the influence of the character of Mary—Keshab, started his work of reform; it was the "Brahmos" who had become "Christians" and the "Vaishnavas", the men of conscience who had melted at Monghyr at the name of "দয়াময় পতিত পাবন" *(Dayamoy, Patitapaban,*—the Merciful—the Purifier of the fallen), etc., were his fellow-workers. Had they worked in a different spirit, the least criticism from outside would have upset them. Those staunch Puritans had become *Bhaktas* and it was these Puritan *Bhaktas* who poured themselves out in সেবা (service).

Then came the *Bharat Asram*—not like other *Asrams*. Sometime in 1896 when Professor Max Muller wrote on Ramkrishna Paramhansa in the Nineteenth Century under the caption "A Real Mahatma" there were found statements in it not warranted by facts. The Saint of Dakshineshwar had passed away ten years before and Keshab Chandra Sen two years and a half before him.

ALLAHABAD, *21st December, 1929*.

See "Maghotsav" (Second Edition, p. 89), 28th January, 1870:

মা, দুঃখ দূর কর, আমি তোমার কোলে যাইয়া শীতল হইব। অমনি মা সেই দুঃখ-অগ্নি নির্ব্বাণ করিয়া দিলেন। মাতা কোলে লইলেন। (Mother! Remove my misery, I shall plunge into Thine lap and shall be comforted.—So Mother extinguished the fire of sorrow,—She took me in Her lap.)

Take yourselves back to fifty years ago—to sixty and seventy years ago—and you will hear the voice whose music charmed so many ears. I see the face which Maharshi Debendranath and Bhakta Ramkrishna loved to behold. All the dust and dirt which his opponents raised cannot cover that face, nor all the clamour of their individual opinions drown that voice. He calls to you and me and all fellow-sinners in the same earnest tone, with all the old humility and love, on his knees with his hands clasped—nay, has not all that was divine in his invitation grown infinitely more tender, all appealing?

Of the several youngmen who, like myself, used to go to Keshab and sit at his feet, I can now find out why the few, who left him, did so. Bhudhar was one of these—he had a severe illness, I was told, from which he recovered with the help of a Sannyasi—and he had

made him his *Guru*. In those days, just after Keshab's ascension, two men made some noise as Hindu Revival Leaders—they were Sasadhar Tarkachudamani and Srikrishnaprasanna Sen. Bhudhar, we heard, was a disciple of Sasadhar and published several Sanskrit sacred books like the Bhagavad-gita.

There was Vivekananda. He was agnostic in temperament (see his discussion with Hiranand as reported by "M" (ম) in কথামৃত, Vol. II of *Kathamrita*). Instead of the Living God he found a better object of worship in Ramkrishna—and at last substituted his own worship for that of Ramkrishna.

There was Baroda Roy who was a Munsif and became a Subordinate Judge. We heard that he had turned an orthodox Hindu. His lecture on Ramkrishna at Dacca shows that he became a great Bhakta of him and of Vivekananda.

There was Bhawani Babu. After Keshab's ascension about 1887 or 1888 he startled us with the news that he was going to be baptised. He became a Protestant Christian at first and then a Catholic.

None of the above found the Living God as the fittest object of worship—but Christ or Ramkrishna or some other *Guru* took His place.

ALLAHABAD, *22nd December, 1929.*

Christ's words to Peter as reported by Luke are these: Luke xxii 31, 32:

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you that he may lift *you* as Wheat:

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

The following from the First Epistle of Peter (Chap. II) are significant:

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tested that the Lord *is* gracious."

* * * *

"But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

ALLAHABAD, *23rd December, 1929*

A psychological study of some of our celebrities will reveal inward characteristics by which posterity will judge them. The *purity* of motives which characterized Keshab's actions should not be confounded with those whose actions were guided by policy in the name of a principle. If Surendranath Banerji led political Bengal, so to say, was he not found wanting when weighed in the balance of real Right and Wrong? As long as it was a question of "rights and privileges," he was the uncrowned king of Bengal in those days—but it was found by thoughtful people that he was no *original* thinker, had nothing *new* to offer to his countrymen—what he had read in Burke (of English) and Italian history (Mazzini) supplied him with mottos for his own political propaganda. The remark attributed to Keshab

about him that he pushed back his country fifty years behind ;—while Keshab was carrying it "onward, forward, heavenward."—Keshab looked up to Heaven for light to guide him and his country and when he found that light was growing bright and brighter he proclaimed it as no one else could do at the time, as no one else had done for centuries before him or in the half a century after him, in thundering words—"Behold the Light of Heaven in India!"

Those among our people, who were upset by the opposition of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and did not know what to do with the so-called patriots of the Surendranath Banerji type, could not give that whole-hearted allegiance to the New Ideal which was becoming clearer and clearer, clearer than noonday in Keshab's mind. So just after Keshab's ascension followed those dissensions in our body which worked such havoc of his best hopes. And in the thirty years after 1884, the one thing which was like an oasis in a desert, was the Sangha at Lucknow in 1914. How those who had separated from one another and made themselves into small groups, were drawn to one another, and made into one family and for days and months met and talked, wrote and sang together, spent and were spent in the service of the Mother and Her sons and daughters. The daughters specially found new ways of usefulness opened to them. Once again it seemed we were not going back, though "Back to Keshab" was the new *mantra* we were learning. In fact in finding him (Keshab), we found his principle was "Onward, Forward and Heavenward." And there was no going *back*. The grace of the Divine Mother came and flooded our lives reminding

us "Where sin abounded, there did grace *much more* abound!"

In the more than fifteen years after the Sangha at Lucknow have we gone on always? No. We have forgotten Keshab's *mantra* of "স্বাধীনতা" (Independence)—"Onward, Forward and Heavenward"—listening to the siren songs of Satan. There have been things good, bad and indifferent, and when everyone speaks of Freedom, the Freedom for which Keshab lived and died lay hid under inferior kinds of the same thing. The atmosphere began to change with the advent of superior quality of people. Gokhale, after Surendranath Banerji, was one such. Then came Gandhi. But how few know that what is best in them came, by the law of heredity as it were, from Keshab Chandra Sen. Before Gandhi was born, Keshab visited Bombay and Madras, "alone and unbefriended", and convulsed the educated society of both these places as no one else had done before him. Those who felt the electric shock of his spoken words included both Europeans and Indians. Among the latter were Bhandarkar and Ranade. The latter visited Calcutta and saw Keshab nearer home and found him and his fellow-missionaries better men in reality than the "phenomenal popularity" of the leader indicated. *Ranade was the Guru of Gokhale and Gokhale was the Guru of Gandhi.*

ALLAHABAD, *24th December, 1929.*

If Hinduism such as the Vedic *Rishis* practised had remained *pure*, there would have been no need of a Buddha shaking by his new Message the foundation of Hindu Society. Why was he looked upon as an alien and at last "banished" as they said? And if Shankara's

Adwaitavad had been rightly practised and preached—or in other words, had been left in the hands of Providence and allowed to grow and spread itself according to His own laws, and not according to the theories of *Adwaitavadis,* had there been true humility and sincerity in its professors—there would have been no need of a Mahomet coming in the guise of a Mohammedan invasion of India. Was there not another shaking to its centre there of Hindu Society? There must have entered into it elements which sapped its foundations and prevented its growth and expansion. Shankara's *Adwaitabad* defeated its ends substituting the worship of man for the worship of God. It was a Merciful Providence lurking beneath all the merciless destruction of temples and images by Mohammedan Rulers. Mohammed's *Ekamevadwitiyam* must find a place in the Hindu's worship. The confounding of Pantheism and Polytheism should not be allowed; the *Bhaktas* like Kabir and Nanak were raised by Providence to make a New India. When Christ came in the guise of European Conquerors—all the errors and misdeeds of the latter did not hide from a Rammohan's vision the ministry of this hidden Servant of God, and Keshab saw it clear as noonday that Indian Society was being shaken to its centre by this new force. Vedic Hinduism, and Vedantic, and Pauranic, and Tantric, each in its turn had become corrupted in its followers and needed purifying. In each case there came the cleansing fire from heaven. So the history of India today must not be a repetition (পুনরুক্তি) of what one, a private individual, understands by the Vedas, or another understands by the Vedanta, or a third by the Puranas and Tantras—but a growth through all these into something

new. And this is the new India of the New Dispensation, the বিধান ভারত *(Bidhan Bharat)*.

There seems to be deep sense here and there in what Romain Rolland writes of Ramkrishna and Keshab but in other places there is so much nonsense that one does not like to proceed further. He is a literary man, a novelist I understand, and has some intuitions in certain matters—but like other literary men as Renan or our Bankim Chatterji he has his limitations. A Renan trying to fathom the depth of Christ's life or a Bankim of Krishna's life is interesting perhaps as an experiment—but whether or not it is অনধিকার চর্চ্চা (handling matter not within one's own province) may be a question.

Romain Rolland has been influenced by Dhan Gopal Mukerji's "Face of Silence" it seems. But both suffer from that want of first-hand knowledge of Keshab (his words and acts) which we possess. He has tried to give a psychological analysis of his character from a historical (chronological) study of such records in English as he has found of Keshab's fellow-apostles (not disciples). He has read, it seems, P. C. Mazumdar's *Life and Teachings of Keshab* and from what he has read, and learnt from Ramkrishna's disciples, he has formed his own estimate of Keshab. "Keshab," writes Romain Rolland, "makes the strange attempt of allying Christ with Socrates and with Chaitanya, giving to each in his life and thought. Finally in 1882 he takes the decisive step. He confesses belief in Christian Trinity."

ALLAHABAD, *2nd January, 1930.*

After reading again this morning "We Apostles of the New Dispensation", one can see where Keshab's presentation of the whole thing (New Dispensation) differs

altogether, one might say, from what Ramkrishna is reported to have said about the different religions being different ways of approach to God. Besides *immediacy* and *all-inclusiveness* there is *subjectivity*. If he had spoken of the new light of this New Dispensation in his annual sermon in 1875, he had spoken, still earlier, of its manifestations in his weekly sermons at the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Mandir.

How can The New Dispensation as revealed to Keshab and his fellow-apostles and to all Sadhaks, etc., be confounded with the *realisation* of Ramkrishna? The whole thing studied historically and spiritually reveals characteristics which have so much of *originality* in them that the question of 'borrowing' is out of place.

ALLAHABAD, *6th January, 1930.*

Providence had it in his mind to make a New India out of the old and He sent, for this purpose, Keshab Chandra Sen who better than anyone else represented this New India. When his whole life was consecrated it changed the life of his family (the Colutola household)—it changed the life of Bengal, of India—and at the end of his career he stood as the Representative of all Asia. There was no jugglery in all this. A scientific process was at work—and historically studied, there is a continuity between the first and the last stage. Read 1 Peter, Chap. II, 9-10 and you will see that "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, an holy nation," is the New Indian Nation of the New Dispensation. When Keshab wrote *"Young Bengal: This is for you"* and then *"An Appeal to Young India,"* and he lastly delivered *"Asia's Message to Europe"* he showed the different stages of his growth—of the many

influences which contributed to his growth,—that of Ramkrishna Paramhansa was one. But the two were different characters not to be confounded.

ALLAHABAD, *8th January, 1930.*

Those fifty years since the formal proclamation of the New Dispensation, have they not helped to bring out the spiritual portraits of Keshab, the New Man, in diverse situations? "Every inch of this man is real, tremendously real." If so, let the *Jeevan Veda* be read, "chewed and digested"—and, if read between the lines, will not some portraits come out of them? The New Artist must be original enough to catch tints of the New Faith, the New Love, the New সমন্বয় (Harmony) of the New Man of the New Dispensation. Is it the first chapter of *Jeevan Veda?* The spontaneous prayerfulness has to be portrayed. And those who *saw* him in prayer did they not notice how "his countenance was changed?" See Troilokyanath's remark in পরিশিষ্ট (Appendix) of *Keshab Charita* under the heading of প্রার্থনা (Prayer). When leaving Monghyr after the Man-worship agitation, how he knelt and prayed on the platform of the Jamalpore station. And when he returned from Simla to Monghyr—on the platform of the latter station how Bijoy Krishna took him to task, threatening to crush his pride (আস্পর্দ্ধা . If these were moments of trial, were there not many moments of joy—of enjoyment of such peace and happiness as passed comprehension? In the *Bharat Asram,* leaving out the period of অগ্নি পরীক্ষা (Fire Baptism), there were many (more than can be remembered) occasions when the *grace* of God was seen in his words and acts, in his uprising and downsetting (and the grace of God is no

abstraction to be intellectually apprehended, but a spiritual reality to be felt, seen, touched, tasted with the spiritual senses).

Kunja Behari Deb in that hymn "আর কি তেমন করে" *(ar ki teman kore)* gives some portraits—Krishna Behari Sen in the *Liberal and the New Dispensation* has some. And that letter of Krishna Behari of 1872 to an English lady describing Keshab in the pulpit on the Maghotsav day.

ALLAHABAD, *10th January, 1930.*

If Romain Rolland thinks that injustice has been done to Debendranath Tagore by the Paramhansa Ramkrishna's reported attitude to him (see Prabudha Bharat *)—it is a man of the people's attitude towards an aristocrat—he (Romain Rolland) will also find out that some of the remarks attributed to him about Keshab's Brahmoism are those of a man of সাধন সিদ্ধি (*Sadhan-sidhi*—fulfilment of Sadhan) towards one of কৃপাসিদ্ধ (*Kripasidha*). He the Paramhansa, like Buddha, had passed through কঠোর সাধন (the practice of austerities) and how could he believe that God could be *seen* so easily as Keshab professed? He would think of it as pretension had not his eyes told him a different tale. When first he saw the youngman (Keshab) on the *Vedi* of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, did he not single him out

* *Vide* Footnote 2, at page 168 of "Life of Ramkrishna" by Romain Rolland (Indian Edition).

Ramkrishna, when he went for the first time to see Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, was invited by Maharshi to a feast the next day, and he was then told to come properly dressed. Ramkrishna did not give a straight answer. Next morning Maharshi wrote to him cancelling the invitation. Ramkrishna did not go to Maharshi a second time. (Ibid., p. 170.)

of the whole congregation (assembly) as the only one whose soul had dived into the deeps of the Infinite?. And then when he met him for the first time at Belghoria, did not their souls recognise each other as kindred? Soul passing into soul—greeting, embracing, kissing each other? Some such thing must have happened or why all those expressions of love and friendship which escaped his lips so often? There was something in the personality of Keshab which demanded reverence—he was not to be easily ignored or outgrown. That the Paramhansa had his own experiences of the Divine Mother—the *Kali* whom he worshipped revealing Herself in different forms—and these experiences were deep and real, full of heavenly sweetness. That does not make Keshab's experiences of the Divine Mother less real or deep. Nay, the method of their realisations differed. With Keshab it was not a *solitary* সাধন (Sadhan) as it was with Ramkrishna. Keshab was from a boy a leader of men, so to say—the Sangat, the ministry at the Adi Brahmo Samaj, the Revival of *Bhakti* at Monghyr, the visit to England, the Indian Reform Association and all the activities connected, the *Bharat Asram* specially, and all that comes under the heading *New Dispensation*, it was সহজ সাধন and সহজ সাধন (Sahaj Sadhan), all or most of his deepest experiences coming out of it. When he wanted to speak on Jesus Christ in 1866, see how he worded his subject: "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia" and when Pratap wanted to know his mind on the subject, Keshab wrote, "As regards my recent lecture, you ought to remember that I was never ambitious of making Jesus Christ the subject of a learned literary essay or theological discourse. *Unless I can live*

Jesus to some extent at least, I cannot talk Jesus. Nor could I undertake to preach Jesus to my countrymen till I am fully persuaded that the time has come for such preaching. In other words I must be fit, and the age must be fit, before I can wield the sword which that inspired Prophet brought with him into the world. Of course I have my own ideas about Christ but I am not bound to give them out in due form, until *altered* circumstances of the country gradually develop them out of my mind."

Does not all this show that Keshab did not grow as a private individual—but from the beginning there was the consciousness of his being the representative of his country and age—true nationalism and true universalism at the same time,—and his growth meant the growth of New India, the growth of the New Age—"a citizen of the world." And every stage in this growth brought its trials, and all trials ended in triumphs. And his triumphs (জয়লাভ) are triumphs for every man, woman and child of New India. "Keshab shall triumph" was one of the mottos once seen in Bepin Dutt's room (Machua Bazar Road, near the Mandir).

Emerson in his Essay on *The Poet* says:

"The people fancy they hate poetry, and they are all poets and mystics."

"Beyond this universality of the symbolic language, we are apprised of the divineness of this superior use of things, whereby the world is a temple, whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures and Commandments of the Deity, in this that there is no fact in nature which does not carry the whole sense of Nature and the distinctions which we make in events, and in affairs, of low

and high, honest and base, disappear when nature is used as a symbol. Thought makes everything fit for use. The vocabulary of an omniscient man would embrace words and images excluded from polite conversation. What would be base or even obscene, to the obscene, becomes illustrious, spoken in a new connection of thought. The piety of the Hebrew prophets purges their grossness. The circumcision is an example of the power of poetry to raise the low and offensive. Small and mean things serve as well as great symbols. The meaner the type by which a law is expressed, the more pungent it is, and the more lasting in the memories of men." (Morley's Edition of Essays, pp. 318-19.)

ALLAHABAD, *14th January, 1930.*

If Keshab made a public pronouncement on Heaven's Light revealing itself more and more in the India of his time, 1875, he made another pronouncement under a different heading: "God-vision in the Nineteenth Century." In the one he spoke as the Representative of India—in the other as the Representative of the Age. In both there is new Message—a New Gospel for India and the world. There is nothing of the solitary mystic initiating *chelas* into a private cult সাধন (Sadhan). "Accept Him, my countrymen and *all India, now disintegrated and dismembered, will become one in the Lord. Yea, the whole world will be one in Him.*" It is a self-revealing God in whose hands are the destinies of nations and individuals of whom Keshab speaks. And on the part of man it is the faith which *regenerates* individuals and nations. There is nothing of policy, expediency, etc., for Keshab is the honestest of men. It is all clear as noonday—and compared with it how

the present atmosphere (political) seems confusion worse confounded.

ALLAHABAD, *15th January, 1930.*

All that Keshab had spoken of faith and vision in his Town Hall (or annual) sermons "Regenerating Faith" (1868), "Behold the Light of Heaven" (1875), "God-vision in the Nineteenth Century" (1880), pales before his Prayer on the occasion of the *Arati* in 1881. And the midnight preceding it how filled with solemn exhortations and prayers. Every new occasion brought forth a new self-revelation of the Divine Being. And when He began to reveal Himself as the Supreme Mother what untold sweetness, what beauty of holiness, what indescrible charms melted, filled with ecstasy the whole congregations and all those who listened to him in the Brahma Mandir on such blessed occasions. Was not the *Arati* the most blessed of these? Read in this connection Hebrews XII. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," etc.

CHAPTER VII

APPRECIATION OF KESHAB BY SOME LEADING MEN

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I

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In Bengal about a generation ago if there was a Voice, it was Keshab Chandra Sen's. ....But scarcely anyone except Keshab Chandra Sen has agitated the speculative thought of nearly all the English-speaking Bengalees. There have been many "leading men" but scarcely another such leader of thought...........He was not great in the subjects taught in the schools; and one is not surprised that his academic career was not much of a success. But a leader of men, in particular a spiritual leader, is not required to be a great scholar, philosopher or scientist. He needs to have other qualifications; and in these Keshab Chandra Sen was particularly rich. His mind was not weighed down by learning, nor refined into a discursive subtlety by the grinding-stone of logic or metaphysics, but it was instinct with a fire that illumined its own possessions, communicated its warmth to all it came in contact with and its light to all who were capable of receiving it. The Divine afflatus which we call genius was in him. That breath was the breath of his life. Intensity of conviction, earnestness of spirit, a burning desire to know the truth

and make it prevail, made him what he was. Providence had endowed him with rare oratorical powers ; and when these were associated with a commanding personality, a pleasing, cheerful countenance, and a voice at once powerful and melodious, it seemed as if he was the chosen instrument of the purposes he was destined to fulfil.

In his earlier teaching he was mainly critical. His speeches are pervaded with a rationalistic spirit. It was the rationalism, however, not of the unbeliever, but of the believer. He waged war against superstition and prejudice and unmeaning convention. He did not, like the shallow atheist, regard human reason, especially the reason of the individual, as the guiding light of life. But in his allegiance to the Divine Will and Reason he felt himself bound to oppose the artificialities with which man had clogged the free forces of human life and soul. His war against prejudice was inspired, not by his idolatry of the human reason, but by his reverence for the Divine Reason. It was the iconoclasm, not of Voltaire, but of Luther.

There could be no doubt of his sincerity, for he practised what he preached and suffered much in social life. It must not be supposed that he spoke only on ancient social customs. His scheme of reform was wide. He spoke on social purity, on temperance, on the education of boys and of girls, on higher education, on primary education, on the duties of the British Government in the East, on the ethics of war, on the spirit which should guide Englishmen in either dealings with the people of this country. It is easy to see from his speeches that he spoke with honesty and courage.

Addressing assemblies, wholly or largely English in their composition and presided over by eminent officials, he spoke unreservedly on what he considered to be the evils of Indian administration, the conventionalities, the demoralising practices of Western social life, and, if an apparent solecism will be pardoned,—the barbarities of modern European civilisation. At the same time, he believed that British supremacy in India was a Divine Dispensation. The earnestness of the speaker is manifest in every line of his utterances. In England, as in India, he was ready to beard the lion in his den, and he delivered his home truths with an unsparing rhetoric. Alike in the East and the West, he was iconoclastic. He knew no flattery and was staggered by no authority. He declaimed against forms, forms that were useless, forms that were mischievous, forms that hid the reality, that misled and debased the soul. He was for peace, love and light. He pleaded for simplicity in life, sincerity in thought, worship of none but the Most High, and worship in no other way than a reverent bending of the soul. With advancing years his mind expanded. He ceased to be purely critical and began to be constructive. The second stage of his thought may be called the stage of appreciation, of interpretation, not merely of the Hindu religion but of all religions that he knew, not merely of Hindu social and religious practices but of all social and religious practices that he knew. Keshab Chandra Sen is seen at his best in the perfection of his glory, in the fulness of his intellectual and spiritual powers, in the latest years of his life. The fire of his youth continued not merely unabated; it had been sublimed. It was all light, no heat. In his own life

he had passed from the hero's strife to the saint's rest. And he was prepared to teach the world, not only how to battle with wrong, but how to attain peace. He offered to the world an appreciation of Jesus as taught and practised by Jesus himself, an appreciation of Hinduism as taught and practised by the ancient Hindu saints and seers; of Islam as it is in itself and as it was intended to be; of Buddhism as it is in itself and as it was intended to be. By observation and reflection, he discovered the virtue of Yoga and came to understand the Yogi. The formulæ of Vedic worship and Vedantic Philosophy revealed their meaning to his ripened mind. By inner experience he came to realise the possibility and the value of inspiration; and he was able to read in a new light the life and teachings of the great religious teachers of the world. The conflict or even the diversity of religions appeared to his instructed vision as a delusion. All religions, he saw, were one, even as God Himself was one...... He thus came to his idea of the Harmony of Religions, of the Religion of the New Dispensation, *most fiercely attacked by those who know it least.* But Keshab Chandra Sen, though he saw the errors of bigots and zealots, was ready to excuse them for he had seen their origin and explanation. He saw a meaning in Forms and Ceremonies. He had found a key to the history of Religions and was prepared to be tolerant to all, but was himself not liable to be ensnared in the meshes of any sect which believes in nothing but its own label. What a pity he passed away in the fulness of his powers before he had done more to spread the new light! But, as he himself was wont to say, "Thy will be done."

II

It is unfortunate not only that Keshab Chandra Sen passed away before he had done more to spread the new light, but that the light itself was mistaken for a will-o'-the-wisp by so many of his followers who, in consequence, repudiated his leadership and seceded from his party. *No one was better fitted to proclaim the new gospel,* to interpret and vindicate it to the classes that had come under the rationalistic influences of English education. Ramkrishna Paramhansa had already been inculcating it by parables and in an easy conversational way to a miscellaneous group that was attracted to him. A little later, Pandit Bijoy Krishna Goswami, once a disciple of Keshab Chandra, was communicating similar truths to men, mostly Hindus, to whom his personality was a fascination. Several English educated men came under the influence of these teachers and were profoundly affected by it, but neither of them commanded the respect of the educated classes generally to anything like the extent that Keshab Chandra Sen did. Nor did they know so well as Keshab Chandra how to reach the mind or the heart of those classes. His disciples had not his plasticity or openness of mind, and when he proclaimed his ideas, subsequently known as the New Dispensation, several of them *mistook their own narrowness for superior wisdom and consistency* and regarded him as one misguided, suffering from an aberration or a weakening of the brain. They went further. When he spoke of being the recipient of *adesha* or Inspiration, they looked upon him very much in the same light in which so many English writers have regarded Mahomet, either as a maniac subject to delusions or as a positive,

pretentious impostor. His catholicity in religion, his idea of the Harmony of Religions, they regarded as a compromise with error. *They held themselves to be the sole possessors of truth* and they could not permit their leader to dally with other systems of faith or to recognise in them any substratum of truth. The new revelation of which he claimed to be a possessor was, in their judgment, only an instance of a relapse, a back-sliding. Keshab Chandra Sen lived to discover that his older teaching, if it had bred some sort of a faith, had bred more of scepticism and self-sufficiency. He was unable to slay the Frankenstein he had raised. He was overthrown.

It takes time for a creed to spread. It can only be regretted that Keshab Chandra did not live long enough to spread the new creed—a creed new to him and his party but by no means new in this country.

Those, however, who had willingly sat at his feet, to imbibe lessons in criticism and pick holes in the logical garments of the traditional religions, rebelled against him when he announced the conquests he had made in the field of spiritual truth by the newly opened spiritual eye. The blind cannot always implicitly believe in the seer. Keshab as a seer could not be trusted by all of those who had so long cheerfully accepted his metaphysics, his logic, his iconoclasm. No wonder. Men who have never realised God may be forgiven if they take anybody to be a charlatan who professes to have realised Him. 'Adesh' or Inspiration must appear as a morbid fantasy to one to whom God is only an hypothesis, a possibility, an inference, a latent force, a suggestion of the order of nature, an unknown and

unknowable something. To one who had realised God as a near and friendly Personality, as an ever-present guide and companion who listens and speaks, Inspiration is real as life. There is abundant evidence that it is no hallucination. Whether it comes from without or is the voice of the indwelling Divine soul rendered articulate, there it is:—a fact that is undeniable, a fact that is confirmed by circumstances and verified by results, a fact that no psychic law can explain. It comes only to the pure, tranquil, devout mind. It is a direct proof at once of the existence of God and of His relations with man, offered not to convince the sceptic but to heal and guide the faithful, pious and reverent soul. It comes not to the man proud of his intellect or purse, but to the humble, unsophisticated soul, to the guileless shepherds, the simple fishermen, the humble carpenter, the untutored village maiden, to the man in deep distress who losing all trust in himself and abandoning all hope of help from man, looks upward for relief. It comes in different ways to different men, asleep or awake; comes sometimes as a message for a great purpose, sometimes as a guidance in a trivial matter of individual life. Blessed are they who can receive it. Every one who says he has received it, is not an impostor, nor the victim of a delusion. When Keshab Chandra Sen received his inspirations, he had spiritually progressed, not declined...

The worship of any form may be denounced as idolatrous, but the fortunate individual who has witnessed what may be called a phenomenal manifestation of God, cannot do but worship it. His own experiences confirm him in the conviction that he is pursuing no phantom, for he finds his prayers listened to, his question answered,

his wounds healed. Illusions never render that service. According to a man's deserts are his rewards. As he sows, so he reaps. He who practises self-knowledge and by laborious methods at last attains *jnana*, discovers God in himself not in any phenomenal aspect but as an abstract verity. He discovers Him by realising his unity with Him...... The world has room enough for both the *jnani* and the *bhakta*, for the mystic and the formal worshipper......

Keshab Chandra Sen in his maturest days had come to appreciate both these methods and the unity of their purpose. But when he announced this recognition he saw himself not appreciated by those who were tied down to the formula of Formless Brahma and who would neither admit the possibility of a Divine Manifestation commanding worship, nor recognise the futility of dispensing with formal worship, before *Brahma* had been realised by *Yoga*. Keshab Chandra Sen passed away shortly after he had himself seen the light, and before he had made as many others see it as he had power to influence, if time was spared to him. This article I can only close with an expression of regret that not only were his latest ideas not as widely received as they should have been, but that they were held as a proof of spiritual deterioration. But God works His will in many ways and the neglected truth that Keshab Chandra Sen bequeathed to his countrymen has since been disseminated through other instruments and is destined to spread far and wide.........

It was the fixed article of Keshab Chandra Sen's faith that THE REGENERATION OF INDIA LAY THROUGH RELIGION. That the religion of a people ultimately determines its

life, is true in a great measure of all nations. It is certainly true of India, of the Hindus in particular. The vital fact about Hindus has always been their religion. Their home life, their political ideas and institutions were all founded upon their religion. The relation of father to son, of husband to wife, their duties to each other, were determined by religion. Neighbourly duties, duties to the poor, loyalty to the Sovereign were all part of the religious ideal of life. Keshab Chandra Sen, in spite of his reforming and iconoclastic tendencies, fully realised this. In fact, it is precisely because he realised this that he came to be reforming and iconoclastic. He had a deep and earnest conviction that the way to India's social and political advance lay through a reform of her religion. Social and political life was founded upon the character, and character was founded upon religion. (Read his lecture on "Religious and Social Reformation".)

In politics, as in society and religion, Keshab Chandra Sen had bold ideas of reform and he did not mince matters in formulating them. (Read his lecture on "England's Duties to India")..............

A nationality is never created by voluntary, spasmodic efforts. It grows ; and in growing takes its own time......

It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that Keshab Chandra Sen valued religion only as an instrument of social and political reform. Not intellect, not even character, but the religious sense is the greatest fact about Man...... It is his distinctive mark......

No real advance, individual or national, is possible without a proper use and training of religious sense.

Indian's hope rests upon an awakening of the religious sense and a religious life......

Religion must be the main spring of life and thought, and not a mere cant of the stump orator.

To make a fetish of Politics and use Religion only as a tool, when necessary, is to make the sovereign and the slave interchange places; and a swift and serious catastrophe can be the only result of that sacriiegious perversion.

(B)—Vice-Chancellor Reynolds

Convocation Address, 1884, Calcutta University

(Extract)

We meet now and then with a man, in whose character the various elements are so genially mixed, that while the powers of a capacious intellect are cultivated to their fullest development, the soul remains as pure as the soul of a child, and the heart as tender as the heart of a woman. When such a man has the divine faculty of impressing others with the great truths which permeate his own soul, he becomes a leader of men, and *his appearance inaugurates a new era in the spiritual and mental history of the world*. Such was Sakyamuni probably the greatest man whom this country has ever produced. But Sakyamuni, you will perhaps say, is a semi-mythical personage; his age is too far removed from ours; the conditions of modern life are different; to us of the present day he is little more than an abstraction and a name. Well,—*this country has produced, in the present century, a man cast in a very similar mould*, a man who has lived and worked among

us, whose features were familiar to us all, and whose words are still fresh in the memory of many who are present today. I will not attempt to determine the exact rank which history will assign to Keshab Chandra Sen in the noble band of thinkers, reformers, and philanthropists. The full measure of his greatness we of the present generation are perhaps unable to appreciate; just as a traveller, standing at some mountain's foot, cannot truly estimate the height of the eminence which towers above him. On this point, the next age will form a more accurate judgment than is possible now. But I think we shall not err in saying that when the verdict of posterity is passed upon the life and work of Keshab Chandra Sen, *four characteristics in his career* will be marked out for prominent notice.

First, the marvellous harmony with which his mind united some of the noblest products of Western culture and civilization, with the depth and thoughtfulness of the Oriental intellect. *Secondly,* the just proportion which his temperament maintained between the domain of thought and the sphere of action. Penetrated as he was with the spirit of devotional religion, he was yet no visionary mystic, his periods of seclusion and meditation were but intervals in which he gathered inward strength for the active prosecution of the work to which his energies and his life were devoted. *Thirdly,* the catholic spirit which led him to recognise the germs of truth in all religious systems, and to assimilate the loftiest and most ennobling principles of them all. *Fourthly,* the generous and large-hearted charity which made his career a crusade against all forms of ignorance, oppression and wrong. The amelioration of suffering, the extension of

education, the advocacy of temperance, the discouragement of child-marriage, the emancipation of the Hindu widow—these were the *practical aims by which he sought to lighten the burdens and elevate the condition of those around him,* no less than by the speculative truths of the pure and lofty theism which he taught.

I have dwelt at some length upon this topic, partly because, in such an assembly as this, it is natural to refer to so momentous an event as the death of *one of India's noblest sons,* and also because the subject is one which seems to me not inappropriate to the occasion which has called us together today. For, though much of Keshab Chandra's greatness was peculiarly his own, the distinctive character of his teaching was largely influenced by his education and training. It is a rare thing for a great religious reformer to be a tolerant man. A religious reformer must be thoroughly in earnest; and a thoroughly earnest man, from the depth of his own convictions, is apt to be impatient with those who differ from him, and to be blind to the merits of any other system than his own. The breadth of view which distinguished Keshab Chandra Sen, the catholicity of mind which gave him earnestness without intolerance, and faith without dogmatism, was due (if I mistake not) to his study of history, to his knowledge of the rise and progress of other theological systems, to his acquaintance with the phenomena of religious thought in other ages and other countries. He was an illustrious example of that culture which it is the aim and the end of this University to foster, the development of the Eastern mind through the science and the literature of the West. And there is another reason why, before such an audience

as is gathered here today, I should speak of the great man whom India has lost. *The life of Keshab Chandra Sen is a pledge and an assurance that Providence has yet a great destiny in store for this land.* The age and the country which has produced such à man, will look forward with hopeful anticipation to the next scene of the drama in which he played so distinguished a part. But it is not enough merely to wait and to hope. It remains for you, the students of this generation, to follow in his footsteps, students, to complete his work, to show yourself worthy to be called his fellow-countrymen!

(C)—PANDIT SHIVANATH SHASTRI

I

KESHAB ANNIVERSARY MEETING ADDRESS OF 8TH JANUARY, 1910

(Translated from Bengali)

In every *Yuga* when religious fervour in human societies gets rusty and the result is the predominance of wicked activities and sinful acts, the Heavenly Father sends the prophets to get those societies cleansed of those evils. The readers of histories of different nations will find many instances of these things. It is known to the readers of the history of Palestine, that it was an evil time for that country when the Romans extended their dominion into that holy land. With the advent of foreign rule, the wickedness and the depravity of the conquering nations penetrate into the character and society of the conquered people. Thus, for this and other

reasons, the condition of the people of Palestine reached the most miserable stage.

The advent of Jesus Christ was to work the deliverance of these unfortunate beings. Jesus found that the national character of the country had gone down to the most disgraceful and the lowest level, and it was not an easy task to free the people from such calamity.

The cancer had bred in the bone and effective treatment was necessary. A building could be put in order by two ways, *viz.*, *first*, by effecting petty repairs; *secondly*, by building anew. Superficial mendings do not commend to them. Expert physicians are not satisfied with checking the outer symptoms only, but they direct their attention to effect radical cure. Similarly, the real healers of the human failings do not like to have only some superficial reforms. They, by the grace of God being blessed with keen insight, would dive deep to find out the real cause of all iniquities and labour for eradicating the very root cause of all such mischiefs. They are for wholesale reforms.

Jesus said thus:

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy strength. If love for God grows in man's heart then all sorts of vitiations disappear."

Humanity can be divided into four classes:

(1) Those given to luxury and indulgence of senses.

(2) Those who pride themselves on knowledge and intellect.

(3) Ascetics.

(4) Prophets and Apostles.

During Jesus's time the people of Judea belonged to

any one of the first three classes. The ascetic John the Baptist used to rebuke those who were addicted to vices and those who were hypocrites and religious impostors.

The prophet (Jesus) saw that it would not do to condemn only luxury and religious conceit, but something must be done to enable man to reach the feet of God to taste and enjoy eternal happiness and peace. So by his own life and death he has presented an example before the world of what was madness in love for God.

Such is the case in every part of the world. In Arabia, Mohammad was born for this mission. When there were moral and spiritual degradations in the North-West India, there was the advent of Nanak. When Bengal was pervaded with utter darkness Sri Chaitanya was sent by Providence. Again after another four hundred years there came another dark age in Bengal and there was the advent of some other Great Men. The one (Keshab) to whom we have assembled here to show respect today belongs to such a class of Great Men. In early youth he (Keshab) forsook all desires for worldly enjoyments and floated the bark of life on the stream of God's love.

There cannot be any doubt that Keshab, a grandson of Ramkamal Sen, could easily have worldly honour and position had he wanted them.

His guardian had placed him in an humble situation in the Bank of Bengal. There he, after attending to his office work, used to utilise his leisure in thinking over means for the welfare of his motherland. It was at this time he published his tract "Young Bengal: This Is For You." He began to present new ideas before his countrymen.

There is no room for doubt that if he had cared he could have occupied one of the top-most places in the Bank of Bengal. But he did not go that way at all.

It was the will of Providence that through Keshab He would bring about the deliverance of India, put new life to its lifeless society. So Keshab gave up his worldly activities and dedicated his life to fructify the great mission of his life.

Giving up all the pleasures and happiness of the world he absolutely threw himself into the hands of God. The result was that he was turned out from his family house......was forsaken by his associates in religion and was persecuted by the public. But in spite of all these cruel treatments he exhibited marvellous forbearance and forgiveness and absolute dependence on God. In all these rested his greatness.

(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents,*
by Dr. V. Roy—p. 107.)

II

MAGHOTSAB ADDRESS—JANUARY 1910

(Translated from Bengali)

Keshab's contribution to the Brahmo Samaj is an invaluable asset, and the more we think of it the more we feel that he should have a lasting place in the history of the Brahmo Samaj.

His first teaching is that God dwells in the righteousness of man. In other words, to worship Him by words or rites is not enough ; but to reject falsehood in speech action and life and to accept truth, to do away with wrong and to establish the right, to disassociate with

unholiness and to adopt purity—all these lead to the worship of God. A Brahmo should not rest content with simply the abolition of idol-worship and the introduction of the worship of the Infinite, but he is to recognise the presence of God in his conscience and is to follow His dictates *(adesh)* in conscience at all places, times and stages of life.

By the precepts and example of Keshab Chandra, this conception of religion became so predominant in the hearts of Brahmo youngmen that it brought remarkable changes in many lives. This feeling led us to discard the sacred thread and caste restrictions, and to hate and disapprove of all sorts of falsehood and misrepresentation.

This perception of the Voice of God in the conscience of man developed into Acharya Keshab Chandra's famous tenet of *Adesh* of later times.

Secondly, it has already been said that the main teaching of Maharshi Debendranath's life was to realise the existence of the Supreme Soul in the individual self, to know Him and love Him and thereby worship Him. Debendranath did not include the social life of man in his *Sadhan* for spiritual progress. But Acharya Keshab Chandra unified man's social life as much as his religious worship with the progress of his spirituality. Immediately an intensive agitation followed. Every Brahmo youngman was attracted towards social uplift, *viz.*, to override caste distinction, to educate the womenfolk and to alleviate their condition, to do away with child-marriages, to check polygamy and so on. That movement disturbed Bengali social life. These social movements and revolutions resulted in the birth of a new era in India.

Social revolution of this character is something new in this country. So to connect religion with society and to make social development a matter of religion was absolutely original in this country. The importance of this new message will be fully realised someday in future. Worldly life has been looked upon as the prison-house of the soul in this country. So it was extremely difficult to preach human life and society as the display of God's will and to lead man's thoughts to this channel. A considerable time must elapse before we succeed. All manner of welfare of India depends on the acceptance of this message. So I reiterate that Keshab Chandra has done immense good to society by expressing this idea...... The main teaching of Christianity is to convert human society into the kingdom of God.

The *Rishis* of ancient India taught to feel the pressure of the Divine in one's own soul. Necessarily the worshippers of this country mainly aimed at the concentration of mind. They were indifferent to the social life of man. So far as it can be gathered, Brahmananda Keshab Chandra felt the uplift of society as an element of growth of spiritual life. This is something new in India. Its benefit will be seen in course of time. Now-a-days nobody pays any heed to his message out of antipathy but it is quite certain that the only way to make social life elevated, hallowed, hale and hearty is to establish the throne of the Almighty Father and Saviour in the family and in society. It has been achieved by Brahmananda Keshab Chandra.

Thirdly, by studying Western religion, he acquired another idea and tried to incorporate the conception of sin and remorse into the Brahmo faith. In the religions

of our Eastern lands, worldliness is the main thing to be discarded; in Christianity the most regrettable thing is sin. The devotees of the East are eager to do away with the fascination of the world; the saints of the West on the other hand long to be led by God through the path of repentance and prayer. The sole aim of the saints of this country is to rise above the ties of this earth, whereas the object of the latter is to get rid of sin. Religious life begins here with the renunciation of the world, while the pious life in the West commences with repentance and change of heart. This is the fundamental difference between religious life and its realisation in the East and the West. After a perusal of Christian scriptures Brahmananda Keshab Chandra accepted repentance and change of heart as the commencement and the primary stage of righteous life and endeavoured to incorporate it into the Brahmo faith. The result was that among his Brahmo friends and followers of the new generation repentance and sincere prayer were wonderfully developed.

In 1867 this repentance and earnest prayer grew more and more, as a result of mingling of Vaishnavic faith with Brahmoism. Outsiders could hardly sit in the place where divine service was conducted owing to the weeping, crying and wailing of the Brahmo worshippers. Some Brahmos would roll on the floor as if in a fit during the singing of *kirtans*; some again would weep holding another's feet, and some would fall down at the feet of Acharya Keshab Chandra and weep. This led to the protest movement against hero worship in 1868. But these were only excessive expressions of *Bhakti* and earnestness. That excess stopped in no time;

but that conception of sin, remorse and earnestness that had their expressions then were very enviable. The songs of repentance that were composed during that time will be noticeable in the 'Brahmasangit' (Hymnal) for all time to come.

Fourthly, Maharshi Debendranath explained Brahmo religion in a Hindu spirit and mainly adopted the views of the Upanishads and such other ancient books. But Brahmananda Keshab Chandra studied Christian scriptures......and realised Brahmo faith as a broad, spiritual, universal and mighty religion, and came forward to voice it forth. His lectures on "Jesus Christ—Europe and Asia," "Great Men," and the book named "Slokasangraha" expressed that great idea. To be plain, this broadness and universal spirit in the Brahmo faith were the utmost ideas of his mind. They captured his mind and entered his aspirations and imbued his thoughts. This is what in later times gave rise to the idea of unification of all religions in his *Navavidhan*. It is his principal work in the history of the Brahmo Samaj. Time has not yet come to realise the depth and greatness of this contribution of his. *

* While some erst-while opponents are gradually appreciating Keshab, unfortunately, others are again recently busy with their work of *belittling Keshab,* and are filling the pages of their organs with writings which clearly show that either they have not the capacity to understand Keshab and his religion or having understood, they would not admit them —to serve their own purpose. They are quoting passages from Keshab's *Sebaker Nivedan,* etc., taking particular care to omit such portions which would elucidate Keshab's meaning and his idea of synthesis which they call 'ill-conceived.' It would be profitable to cultivate that right spirit by which one

Even today the religions of this world breathe ancient and communal animosities. The great work in which Brahmo religion is engaged cannot be seen yet but the day is approaching when it will be manifest. Then the name Keshab Chandra Sen will shine as a bright star.

Fifthly, he transformed the Brahmo Church into a religion of *Bhakti* (piety). Before his time, the faith of the Adi Samaj was to a large extent, a faith of *Jnana* (intellection). To know the Eternal One, to meditate and to feel supreme joy in Him were the chief inspirations in the life of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and he tried mainly to instil that conviction into the Brahmo Samaj ......From 1867, Keshab Chandra introduced *Kirtan* similar to that of the Vaishnavas and showed the way to muse over the lives of saints like Chaitanya and thereby brought in a new era.

As a result there was a flow of Vaishnava piety in the Brahmo Samaj. That flow has made the Brahmo religion, a Religion of *Bhakti*. By following the above path, he fitly deserved the name of Bhakta Keshab in the history of religions of Bengal.

Frankly speaking Rammohan adopted the word 'Brahma' and laid the growth of the religious life of the

can with clean conscience approach God and understand rightly His Bhaktas. Dr. V. Rai has rightly said that 'Keshab is a much misunderstood religious teacher.' Keshab addressed God as Hari, Mother, Durga, Saraswati, etc. Pandit Shastri also addressed God as *Krishna* ("কৃষ্ণঃ করোতু কল্যাণং") in his Diary of 6th October, 1903 (*vide* at page 275 of the Shastri's Life, by his daughter Sm. Hemlata Debi). Keshab had been previously criticised most severely and abusively by our Sadharan Samaj friends for calling God, Hari and Mother. Now, however, they themselves are doing so. Truth must prevail ultimately.

Brahmo Samaj open to a danger. The danger was that his religion might take the shape of Vedantism based on 'Knowledge.' For the word 'Brahma' connotes a neuter idea and absence of attributes and simply signifies infinity of existence. This doctrine of Brahma without any attributes is not in favour of the religion of *Bhakti*. He whom we worship is God, is Providence and His wisdom and power and activity are natural. His limitless existence as also His infinity, are of His transcendent *(nirguna)* attributeless nature while His Provident control of the material world and of human life belongs to His immanent *(saguna)* nature rich in attributes. *Bhakti* to God may come from this manifestation of attributes. *Bhakti* has been inspired in this way in every age.

However it be, Brahmananda Keshab Chandra took recourse to the path of *Bhakti* from the bottom of his heart and proclaimed the glory of devotees and thereby founded the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj on the firm basis of *Bhakti*. By this he saved it from the danger of being converted into intellectual Vedantism. For this, he deserves endless gratitude from the Brahmo Samaj.

Sixthly, his second great work is to create a band of missionaries who have faith in the Will of God and by resigning themselves to Him can preach Brahmo faith and devote their mind and body for the welfare of the Brahmo Samaj.

In 1861, he gave himself solely to the spread of Brahmo faith and the service of the Brahmo Samaj by retiring from worldly avocations. His 'True Faith' tells us how he jumped into that way of life. That emotion was then burning in his heart like fire in such a way

that within a short time, it spread steadily among his friends and followers. Many of them did not care to know what they would have for their food the next day. They threw themselves headlong, as it were, into the preaching work of the Brahmo faith. Men were then struck by noticing the power of their self-sacrifice. They lived in extreme poverty with a cheerful heart and spent day after day fasting or on half rations and shoeless trudged along the streets of Calcutta.

People were surprised to observe all these. In course of time this indifference to the world and this religious spirit grew into a powerful spiritual force in the Brahmo Samaj and Brahmo faith spread far and wide. It is a matter of great doubt if the Brahmo Samaj, but for this band of faithful devotees, could have become what we find it today. It goes without saying that behind this force, the influence of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra was greatly in evidence.

Seventhly, he tried to impress strongly on the minds of Brahmos the truth that the Brahmo Samaj is the work of God or a Dispensation of Providence.

Can there be any doubt that the Brahmo Samaj is a Dispensation of mercy of the All-good? It is He Who has revealed it for the foundation of a broad-based, spiritual and universal religion. It is He Who has formed us into a congregation. It is He Who is the Maker and Protector of this congregation. As He sends a child upon the earth and brings it up under the care of the mother and other relations, similarly He gives men a new birth and brings them up under the care of the congregation and bestows on that congregation the charge of broadcasting the new faith. In a word,

Brahmo Samaj is that congregation. He who fails to perceive this, surely his eye of faith has not opened. He who thinks that we human beings are working out the Brahmo Samaj, is indirectly an atheist. This idea is also to be counted as a great contribution of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra. There cannot be any doubt that the more the idea spreads, the greater will be the spiritual force of the Brahmo Samaj.

Besides these seven main points Brahmananda also helped in many ways the formation of the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj, such as to harmonise the triple powers of intellect, devotion, and work—*jnan*, *bhakti*, and *karma*—in the realisation of Brahmo faith, to rouse in the minds of his followers respect and reverence for saints of all ages and all countries, to try to introduce Divine Service in each and every house, to make efforts to eradicate social evils like drunkenness and other immoral practices. Everybody feels that the Brahmo Samaj should remain ever grateful to Brahmananda Keshab Chandra for inclusion of the abovementioned programme.

Who is there to disavow that Brahmananda Keshab Chandra has added depth to the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj by incorporating the abovementioned ideas in it, and has established it on a permanent spiritual basis? Brahmo Samaj is not born only to protest against superstitions and to proclaim a spiritual faith, but its salient contribution is to place the national life on a spiritual basis. It is no easy task to set up this new spirituality in this conservative country. Brahmo Samaj could not do this work if its spiritual life was not deep and profound.

It is beyond doubt that if the Brahmo Samaj can retain all the ideas initiated and expressed by Brahmananda Keshab Chandra, its religious life will attain depth and profundity. He showed the way how to make it deep-seated. God vouchsafes unto us that we may cherish these great ideas and remain ever grateful to him. In the Brahmo Samaj Dispensation, we in successive stages perceive the hand of Providence and the display of His work.

Rammohan Roy roused sleeping India and spoke out, "Do you rise, my countrymen, and muse over the One Who exists alike in water, land and sky." His main work was to teach to think of the True One where there was worship of multifarious gods and goddesses.

After Raja Rammohan came Debendranath who said, "Worship the only Great One whom Rammohan advised you to muse over; worship Him as the Supreme Soul of your souls." Debendranath's principal message was the worship of God. His life's work was to introduce this *Brahmopasana* or Divine worship.

In this way the worship of the Lord surcharged his life.

Afterwards came Keshab Chandra to declare "Follow His will, for He Whom Maharshi Debendranath asked you to worship dwells in your conscience." The first and foremost teaching of Keshab Chandra is to obey the Will of God. He preached it by the example of his whole life. It is unnecessary to reiterate that what he felt as the Divine Will, he would firmly fix on it. It is needless also to say that we did not accept all his words and actions at all and every occasion as the manifestation of Divine guidance. But, that man is to

go by Heaven's Will; that a man must firmly establish himself on his conscience—this great precept we distinctly obtained as we sat at his feet. This was his chief work.

—(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents* by Dr. V. Roy—p. III.)

III

LAHORE ADDRESS—*November 1897.*

(Extracts.)

"It was he (Keshab) who first distinctly articulated the special feature of Brahmoism as a religion of obedience to the Divine Will. Before his time Brahmoism was a religion of the intellect. It was he who first taught that the culture of the heart was as much necessary to religion as that of the mind. He brought devotional fervour and enthusiasm into the Brahmo Samaj and transformed the religion of intellect, which Brahmoism before him was, into a religion of the heart and the soul. And it was Keshab Chandra Sen who first taught us to revere the good and pious men of all ages and all countries.

Many good men, whose names the people of India had nearly forgotten, were again brought to light by him. From him we learnt the lesson of reverence; and it is through his influence that reverence for godly men, without which religion cannot stand, has become a permanent and noble feature of Brahmoism as a DIVINE DISPENSATION, and taught us to look upon the history of our Church as the history not only of our own doings but also of God's dealings with us. It was he who taught us that religion was not a private concern between

man and God, but that it should affect man's whole life, and enter into his dealings with his family and society. He first led Brahmoism out of the four walls of the place of worship and made its influence felt as a purifying agency, in the homes and social customs of the members. Keshab Chandra Sen is the originator of all these special features that characterise the Brahmo Samaj as a spiritually elevated society."

—(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents*
by Dr. V. Roy—p. 12).

Even in his "History of the Brahmo Samaj" P. Shastri says:

"The first thing noticeable was the conviction that he (Keshab) had received a *New Revelation* or a *New Message* from God, far transcending the limits of the old faith of the Brahmo Samaj. *The cardinal feature of this new message was the Unifying Mission amongst the conflicting creeds of the world.*"

"Similarly, each Dispensation in the history of the world, has contributed some great spiritual idea or ideas; whereas the Mission of the *'New Dispensation'* is to bind them all together into a *United Whole.*"

".........I (Shastri) cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the tendency of Mr. Sen's (Keshab's) preachings during the period, was to make his theism *eminently positive.* It was not that dry, nerveless and impotent theism, whose predominant note is intellectual pride, and which lays greater stress on the avoidance of superstition than upon spiritual communion with the Supreme Being."

"*No man has ever surpassed Keshab Chandra Sen in reverence for the great Masters.* He literally bowed himself down to the very dust, as it were, before them.

This reverence was the fountain in him of spiritual impulse and inspiration."

"Thirdly, both by his (Keshab's) preachings and his life, he insisted upon the truth that the highest duty of a servant of God is to surrender himself to the impulse he receives during moments of communion as a Divine guidance for the service of God and Man. *He led the way to complete self-surrender by his personal example.* That Natural Theism can evoke such passionate self-sacrifice is indeed a phenomenon for the civilised world."

"Mr. Sen's (Keshab's) conception of the great and glorious mission of the Samaj to unify conflicting sects and creeds, *was certainly prophetic.*"

"He wanted to show that the New Dispensatiou could imbibe and include all of them (religions) thereby producing a wonderful unity of purpose and an all-comprehensive spiritual kinship, that vision possessed him like a passion during this period and drew him into an ever-increasing effort for its realizations. Indeed the earnestness and persistency with which he preached and practised it *resembled the fire and fervour of a prophet of old.* (The italics are ours.)

Note.—Pandit Shastri was an unsparing critic of Keshab, but still in his sober moments, he made admissions, as stated above, in 1910 and in some previous years. But in 1911 he, however, published his "History of the Brahmo Samaj", which though contained a few correct statements, was full of misrepresentations and misstatements. He showed the MSS. of his book to some of his best friends, who advised him not to publish a work like it, but unfortunately he lent a deaf ear to their sound and valuable advice.

In his "History of the Brahmo samaj" however, as already pointed out, Pandit Shastri has made erroneous statements about facts of which he could not have had personal knowledge.

We mention here one of such instances. In his "Life and Times of Ramtanu Lahiri" translated by Sir Roper Lethbridge, as well as in his "History of the Brahmo Samaj", we find:

"He (Keshab) was caught using unfair means to pass one of his college examinations, and turned out. He had been all along quiet and well-behaved, and great was his shame and bitter his grief at the occurrence. He forsook his former companions, repented for his folly, and spent much of his time in prayer and meditation."

This is far from the truth. Pandit Shastri had admittedly no personal knowledge in the matter, nor could he have any as he was not present in the Examination Hall, nor was he in Calcutta even. He does not say that he got the information from any one who had personal knowledge in the matter. So his story is unauthoritical and as such has no value. If it be said that his source of information is a certain statement in Rev. P. C. Mazumdar's "Life and Teachings of K. C. Sen" it will be found that Mazumdar's statement very much differs from Pandit Shastri's story and the Pandit is guilty of intentional distortion. We would refer the reader to the Appendix to the Upadhya Gour Govinda Ray's "আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র" (Centenary Edition), in which the matter has been discussed.

We give here the statements of three most reliable witnesses who had first-hand knowledge about this incident:

(1) "I wish to say at once that this (the statement quoted above) is a libel on the memory of the good departed man (Keshab). Keshab and myself lived under the same roof. None of our family heard of the incident as it has been related. What actually happened was this: When Keshab was sitting at the examination, one of the boys near him spoke to him. Keshab who was naturally polite and affable, replied to his fellow-student, with the result that both of them were sent out of the Examination Hall. He described the incident to me on his return home, and from what I heard I did not think he was to blame. The statement that this incident had an effect upon Keshab in turning him to prayer and meditation, has been introduced, apparently

to embellish the story. As a matter of fact, Keshab from his childhood was of a religious and meditative disposition. Keshab's scholastic career lasted till the age of twenty, and all that time he was a devout student of Mental and Moral philosophy."

—[Narendra Nath Sen, Editor, "Indian Mirror"—*vide* at pages 93-94 "Appreciation of K. C. Sen, compiled by Rev. Mahendra Nath Bose.]

(2) Relating a conversation he had with the Hon'ble Kristodas Pal, Mr. Gouri Prasad Mazumdar writes in his "Keshab Chandra Sen and the Schools of Protests and Non-Protests" (p. 151):

"Contemporaneous with Keshab in school-life, Hon'ble Pal knew well what had happened in the Examination Hall. Another examinee sitting close by Keshab made an attempt to look towards Keshab, and if possible to talk with him. The guard of the Examination Hall who noticed the ways of the attempting examinee, allowed not both, under rules of the University to write further and thus both were compelled to leave their seats. The Hon'ble Pal in his narration of the event, gave a most reliable evidence of Keshab's innocence in the matter—his religiousness from his boyhood and even of his wonderful abstinence from animal food even when he was a boy of fourteen."

(3) Statement of Keshab's mother in her autobiography in Bengali published by Jogendra Lal Khastagir (p. 82) (translated from Bengali):

"When somebody unjustly treated them (Nobin and Keshab) ill, they became gravely silent, never uttering a word in self-defence. Keshab on one other occasion suffered greatly on account of this trait of character. When in youth he was at school, a certain boy wanted to know something from Keshab (answer of a question at an examination). The teacher came to know of this. The boy who asked the question kept quiet; the teacher laid the guilt on Keshab. Keshab's sense of pride was touched, he remained silent. He submitted to the punishment but never protested that he was innocent."

(D)—Pt. Sitanath Tattvabhusan

of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj

"That religion (Navavidhan) was a developed form of Brahmoism."

"Those who had not followed Keshab's system of worship could neither understand nor appreciate these developments. They wanted to ignore them and lead the Sadharan Samaj to a simpler Theism plus Social Reform. I and those who thought and felt with me protested........."

—(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents*, pp. 23, 24.)

(E)—Late Bepin Chandra Pal

formerly of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

(Extracts from his 'Keshab Memorial' Address of 1893.)

"And was not this catholicity, this absolutely unsectarian spirit, the most marked feature in the religious life of Keshab Chandra Sen? Behold, then, the wide sandal mark of the broadest and the noblest catholicity on the forehead of the *great leader of the New Dispensation.*"

"Raja Rammohan Roy laid the foundation of the edifice, Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore and Babu Akshoy Kumar Dutta constructed its plinth, while it was left to the towering genius of Keshab Chandra Sen to raise the beautiful superstructure of the grand and all-glorious fabric, which when completed, will, while being Hindu in its origin, Hindu in its inception and its designs, yet enfold within itself all nations and all religions, will be the great hall of the Religious Parliament of men, *the great meeting place of the spiritual*

federation of the world, which will unite and harmonise all systems, set all bigotry and religious hatred at rest and settle all theological disputes for good. May you and your work prosper and glorify our common Father. They are a large and varied class, these Hindu reformers, Sir, of the present age, and in my humble judgment Keshab Chandra Sen *occupies the foremost place* among them all. He is the leader of the modern Hindu thought, the leader not only of what his immediate disciples call the New Dispensation—the leader not only of what you call the Brahmo Samaj, but of Hindu reform generally of the present age."

"*In the New Hinduism of Keshab Chandra Sen you will find all the great religions of the world and all the small religions also brought together and harmonised.*"

"Keshab Chandra Sen has not destroyed, but only completed the old religion of our people."

"Keshab Chandra Sen will come out victorious from every test and you cannot, in any way, escape the conclusion that he was the *greatest Hindu reformer of your age.*"

".........and the day will come sooner or later, when the religious federation of the world will meet under the Hindu flag, and when by the mercy of God that day dawns upon the world, the name of Keshab Chandra Sen will not be forgotten,—and on that day the spirit of Keshab Chandra Sen will feel that his earthly life and labours have not been in vain."

(Extracts from his Address of August 22, 1929.)

"His third contribution was the building up of a *concrete Universal Religion.*"

".........To the votary of 'Universal Religion,' Keshab declared, therefore all scriptures are sacred, all disciplines are sacred; all the prophets are seers, and saints of every system are messengers of God and a revelation of God's Life and Love. *This was Keshab's special contribution not only to the theology and devotions of the Brahmo Samaj but also to modern world religions.*

—(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents*, pp. 29 and 42.)

(F)—SIR NILRATAN SARKAR

OF THE SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

"He (Keshab) was the type of the supreme creative artist in the sphere of religious life."

"But Keshab declared that *every* religion was true, each was an expression—a sincere whole-hearted expression of one universal human experience—one fundamental truth of life and universe; each was an unfolding of humanity in a particular age and tradition, and each is complementary to the others in the interdependent and organic whole of Universal Humanity."

—(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents*, pp. 59 and 65.)

(G)—DR. V. RAI

"Keshab is, up to now, the *highest water-mark of the universal religion* of the Brahmo Samaj, and it may be safely predicted that his 'Jeevan Veda' (Bible of Life) will occupy a *permanent and honoured place* in the religious literature of the world."

"Keshab Chandra Sen is a *much misunderstood*

religious teacher, misunderstood not only by others but also by his immediate followers."

"I cannot hope that socialists (and some of them have the reputation of being learned) will cease to misrepresent Keshab and declare that he accepted the mythologies of all established religions; but I venture to hope that all sincere and thoughtful men, who had no first-hand knowledge of Keshab's article, will think twice before accepting such charges against *the greatest religious teacher of Modern India*." (The italics are ours.)

N. B.—This remark applies to all his works.

—(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents*, pp. 68—72.)

(H)—Dr. Saroj Kumar Das, Ph.D.

IN MEMORIAM: KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

Address at the Albert Hall, January 8, 1931.

Year in and year out we meet on this sad occasion dear to offer our homage of respect to the memory of one of the truest prophets of a New India. For nearly half a century we have been holding memorial services and meetings, and recounting therein the varied aspects of that myriad-minded personality we have assembled this evening to venerate. But can we honestly claim to have been any the nearer a complete assessment of the multitudinous interests of his illustrious life that defy compartmental analysis and classification? This accounts for divergent estimates, often of a conflicting nature, that are made of the contributions such great men make to humanity at large. That is perhaps the

inevitable penalty that greatness has to pay. Deplore as we may this phenomenon of human history, it is an accredited fact and has to be accepted as such. Accordingly it is not by the magnitude of their following that we are to estimate the worth of these great men. On the contrary, it is from the heritage of reaction and opposition from their contemporaries as well as successors, that we are the better enabled to make a proper estimate of their influence. This lamentable episode, by no means uncommon in history, furnishes perhaps an ironical commentary on the use the world makes of its great men.

To my mind three things of abiding value stand out and invite a respectful consideration. In the first place, it is the philosophic background of his faith as embodied in a faithful rendering of the 'Word made flesh' in his '*Yoga, Subjective and Objective*' (of which, we are glad to notice, a new edition, with annotations, has just been published). Herein he distinguishes the three places of the Godhead, *viz.*, (i) God in Nature—which he characterises as Objective Yoga, (ii) God in Soul—which he denominates Subjective Yoga, and (iii) God in History, —which is the province of Pauranic or Bhakti Yoga—an idea which, it is a pity, he did not live to elaborate. Indeed, I know of no better document of God-consciousness. His writings show an acquaintance with the positions of Hamilton, Morel, McCosh and other Scottish thinkers of the Revelationist school. But it is astonishing how he could with unerring precision thread his way through the mazes of controversies to this promised land. And this he achieved, be it further remembered, not by means of an appeal to some supernatural authority or infallible book but in the light of his own spiritual

experience. There could be no better vindication of what he preached in his *Jeevan Veda* which, again, has remarkable affinity with what Eucken and his school mean by *Lebensanschaung*.

Next in importance is his view of Divine Dispensation with a Vaishnavite emphasis on the concept of *Leela*. One could very well talk for hours together or write volumes on this single aspect of his teaching. But a memorial meeting provides no occasion for it.

Lastly, the feature in his life-long faith that appeals to me most is his gospel of the harmony or synthesis *(Samanvaya)* of all religions—which is the logical outcome of his view of Divine Dispensation. Verily, has he been christened the *Samanvayacharya*. It has been sometimes contended that the synthesis or *Samanvaya* that Keshab proposed and preached was merely of the nature of syncretism or eclecticism, resulting from the syncretist's characteristic method of viewing the historical religions statically and not dynamically. Others, better informed exponents, tell us, on the authority of Keshab's own teachings on the subject, that his faith was firmly rooted in the belief as to the progressive revelation of the Divine. Personally I am inclined to this latter view, and I wish I could quote chapter and verse to substantiate the point. But it is a theme too large to be entered upon here. Anyway the text of *Samanvaya*, its doctrinal difficulties notwithstanding, impresses me as the unmistakable evidence in Keshab,—if evidence at all were needed—of the typically synthetic genius of the Hindus. One of my esteemed Christian friends who happened lately to discuss this point sharply dissented by reminding me that Keshab's faith was

wholly Christo-centric. My reply to him was that I did not stand in need of that reminder. It was undoubtedly Christo-centric, but ever so much more. Keshab made no secret about the fact that his faith was Christo-centric —but, as I contend, with a difference of emphasis. It was Christo-centric*—with the fullest implications of the term—but with a difference of emphasis. It was not a closed circle. Its centre was everywhere but circumference nowhere. Metaphors apart, Keshab never subscribed to all the findings of orthodox Christianity to the European side-view of the historic Jesus of Nazareth. Those who are interested in following up the matter and learning the whole truth about it first hand would do well to refer to his clear and incisive pronouncements on the Christian Trinity, published for the first time, if I remember aright, in the *Independent* as early as in 1866. That he was not satisfied with the orthodox version of the Christo-centric faith is evident from the fact that he gave in that article a distinct warning, and that in no

* It has sometimes been suggested that Keshab's Church was Christo-centric. He has left us in no doubt as to the nature of his Church In his great lecture on the the Future Church delivered in 1869 Keshab observes 'The future Church will uphold the absolute infinity and unity of the Divine Creator, and will suffer no created thing or being to usurp His sovereignty. It will worship Him alone and thoroughly set its face against every form of creature-worship.' Keshab warned the Christians more than once against the importation of one more divinity into the already over crowded Hindu Pantheon. But he has warmly welcomed Christ as a fellow worshipper and great human exampler in the household of God. He has also accorded honoured places to Sri Krishna and Sri Chaitanya and other saints in his Church. (*Cf.* Keshab's *Sadhusamagam.*)

uncertain terms, to the orthodox Christian missionaries who had not critically read and preached the Christian Trinity, the Mystery. Had he accepted the orthodox interpretation in all its lineaments, the need, at any rate, of an '*Oriental* Christ' of which Keshab was the chief inspirer, would not have at all arisen.

Whatever may be our estimates of the doctrine of *Samanvaya*, there is no denying the fact that this gospel of synthesis, or harmony of all religions is the crying need of the hour. For, we have learnt to our cost that no pact, no patched-up unity can avail when vital issues are at stake. The political platform at least is not the venue where we can achieve a lasting national solidarity that has even a fighting chance in the world of daily life. It has to be achieved, if at all, elsewhere, and the gospel of *Samanvaya* is our unfailing guide here. Standing as we do, at the moment at a critical juncture of our national history, distracted by divided counsels and allegiance, to whom shall we look up for true leadership? We can do no better than exclaim in the words of the poet, adapted to the needs of the occasion:

> 'Keshab! Thou shouldst be living at this hour: India hath need of thee.'

NAVAVIDHAN, JANUARY 29, 1931.

CHAPTER VIII

DR. V. RAI'S "THE BIBLE OF LIFE"

KESHAB AS THE HIGHEST WATER-MARK OF THE BRAHMO RELIGION

Dr. V. Rai of Giridih, an old and highly respected member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, very faithfully translated the Jeevan Veda (Autobiography) of Keshab, into English, under the title "The Bible of Life". The last lines of the Preface to this Translation are as follows:

Keshab is up to now, the highest water-mark of the universal religion of the Brahmo Samaj, and it may be safely predicted that his Jeevan Veda will occupy a permanent and honoured place in the religious literature of the woild.

* * * *

The Greatest Religious Teacher of Modern India.

DR. V. RAI ON KESHAB'S DICTUM "ALL RELIGIONS ARE TRUE"

Keshab Chandra Sen is a much misunderstood religious teacher, misunderstood not only by others but also by his immediate followers. In the Sunday Mirror of October 23rd, 1881, he contributed an article under the heading. "What is the Eclecticism of the New Dispensation?" and in it he expained his doctrine—All religions are true. I do not find it dealt with by his biographers, P. C. Mozoomdar and Gour Govinda Roy.

Siva Nath Sastri criticises it adversely in his 'History of the Brahmo Samaj', but while he quotes two most important sentences from the article, he leaves out an equally important one which limits the whole proposition. I quote below the essential portions of the article and the sentences left out by Shastri in italics.

Keshab wrote:—

"Our position (the position of the New Dispensation) is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but that all the established religions of the world are true." ....That there are truths and therefore, as a matter of course, untruths in all religions, is easily intelligible, but it is a position the establishment of which is of no practical interest to the devout soul......... It (the New Dispensation) delights in God's things and beholds God in the smallest of things. Should it find any but God in the vast established religions of the world? No: It tells us, therefore, not that there are truths in every religion but that all religions are true. Christianity and Hinduism are true; they are true dispensations of God—come to teach us something about God. Both are divine and God-sent; and as such they are truths. *If there are untruths they are grafted on there by men, they can not be God's and we have nothing to do with them.* The question is: are the things related to God, preached by the august founders of these religions—founders who were inspired and who brought special messages from heaven, false?......... All religions are dispensations of God, sent to the world at special times for the salvation of humanity. That they have benefited the world, that they have given human communities a lift from the original position of degradation, that they brought men

one step nearer to God, that they have been the source of peace and consolation to millions, are facts borne out by history. That the founders of them were extraordinary men, sincere, devout, humble, honest, single-minded men, men who fearlesly declared their mission and preached truths not hitherto known is another fact which none can or ought to gainsay. The New Dispensation admits these facts; it therefore accepts them all as coming within the scope of divine providence. If then we insist that these religions are dispensations, we must infer that they are true."

It is clearly seen that Keshab confines the meaning of the word 'Religion' to what is God-given, and excludes from it what is man-made. The following from Martineau will show that Keshab is not singular in attaching such a meaning to the word.

"In the history of mankind, it is long before critical reflection breaks up the complex mass of impressions that gather round the nucleus of religious feeling so as to throw off what is really foreign to it; and while this wild and rude growth lasts, the root which nourishes the tree feeds the parasite as well, and both rise and live and bloom together as apparently one organism and present the look of a single sample of religion. First the skilled observer, then perhaps the believer himself, detects in leaf or fruit the intruding species which clings to a support and steals a life that is not its own, and when it is untwined and cast away, calls it a superstition. False undoubtedly it is but as it never really belonged to the religion, it did not make a false religion. The two uses of the word 'religion'—as a class name for all human mythologies in their unanalysed state, and as an abstraet

name of the essence when disengaged—need to be carefully discriminated. It is the latter sense alone which designates the object of the following 'Study' which enables me to trust 'religion' as one thing everywhere ; which relieves me from the necessity of pursuing all the phenomena covered by the word in the other sense and imposes on me the obligation of looking behind the facts of human psychology to the Divine Realities which they express."

If Keshab's 'All religions are true' means nothing more than that the God-given portions of all religions are true, is not this a useless truism? No, it has several beneficial uses. I shall name only a few. It helps us to follow intelligently the course of evolution in religion. As all truths harmonize with one another, it invites the believer to strive for this harmony by living the several truths in his life. It helps the believer to feel that he belongs to the great body of Bhaktas of all ages and countries, and of all religions. God is one, religion is one, and the body of Bhaktas is one. *(Eka eba paritrata eka dharmastathaivacha : Bhaktanan dalamekeba Brahmoirevam Prakirtate.*

I cannot hope that the socialists (and some of them have the reputation of being learned) will cease to misrepresent Keshab ,and to declare that he accepted the mythologies of all established religions ; but I venture to hope that all sincere and thoughtful men who had no first hand knowledge of Keshab's article, will think twice before accepting such charges against the greatest religious teacher of Modern India.—"The Indian Messenger' July 29th, 1923 ; "The World and the New Dispensation", August 9th, 1923.

A COPY OF THE FIRST EDITION WAS PRESENTED TO M. ROMAIN ROLLAND AND THE AUTHOR RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM HIM

Monsieur Romain Rolland's Letter to the Author

VILLENEUVE (Vaud), Suisse.
VILLA OLGA, SWITZERLAND,
3rd January 1932.

Cher Monsieur Banerji,

Je vous remercie beaucoup de votre livre sur Keshab Chandra and Ramkrishna, que vous m'avez envoyé. Il fixe, d'une facon tout à fait nette, certains points, qui m'étaient restés obscurs dans les rapports entre ces deux grands âmes ; et il me dõnne enfin une chronologie exacte de l'oeuvre et de l'action de Keshab. Je regrette de n'en avoir pu avoir connaissance avant d'écrire mon ouvrage, car J'aurais ainsi évité certaines erreurs, que je m'efforcerai de corriger, par la suite.

Je dois vous assurer, d'ailleurs, que dans des scenes comme celle de la recontre de Keshab mourant avec Ramkrissna, je n'ävais vu (et aucun Européen ne verrait —dans l'acte de Keshab s'inclinant devant Ramkrishna un jeste d'adoration religieuse, mais une simple marque de respect affectueux, qui nous paraissait infiniment touchant, et qui nous faisait aimer encore d avantage Keshab.

Veuilez croire á ma devouée sympathie.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

G. C. BANERJI, Esq.,
Gyan Kutir, Allahabad.

(For English Translation, see next page.)

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Translation

VILLENEUVE (Vaud,)
VILLA OLGA, SWITZERLAND,
3rd January, 1932.

Dear Mr. Banerji,

I thank you profusely for your book on Keshab Chandra and Ramkrishna, which you have sent me. It settles, in a definite way, certain points, which remained obscure, in the relations between the two great Souls; and it (your book) gives me at last, an exact chronology of the work and activities of Keshab. I regret in not having knowledge of those things, before writing my work, for otherwise I could have avoided certain errors, which I shall try my best to rectify later on.

I should assure you, however, that in scenes like that of the meeting of the dying Keshab with Ramkrishna, I have not seen (and no European will see) in the act of Keshab's salutation to Ramkrishna, a gesture of religious adoration. It was only a simple sign of affectionate respect which appears to us as infinitely touching and which makes us love Keshab all the more for that.

Believe me in my devoted sympathy.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

NAVAVIDHAN PUBLICATIONS

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN'S WORKS

English—

True Faith
Essays—Theological and Ethical
Discourses and Writings
Lectures in India (English Edition) 2 vols.
Lectures in India (Third Edition—in preparation)
Keshub Chunder Sen in England (New Edition)
(Lectures, Sermons etc.)
The New Dispensation, 2 vols.
Prayers, 2 vols.
The New Samhita
Jeeban Veda (translated from original Bengali).

Bengali—

সঙ্গত
জীবনবেদ
ব্রহ্মগীতোপনিষদ্
সাধুসমাগম
আচার্য্যের প্রার্থনা (৪ খণ্ড, নূতন সংস্করণ) [কমলকুটীর,
হিমাচল, ভারতাশ্রম, ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রহ্মমন্দির প্রভৃতি]
আচার্য্যের উপদেশ
সেবকের নিবেদন
মাঘোৎসব

ব্রাহ্মিকাদিগের প্রতি উপদেশ

প্রচারকদিগের সভায় নিবেদন

অধিবেশন

Rev. Protap Chunder Mozoomdar's Works

English—

Oriental Christ
Faith and Progress of the Brahmo Samaj
Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen
Heart Beats
The Spirit of God
The Silent Pastor
Ramkrishna Paramhansa
Lectures

Bengali—

আশীষ

স্ত্রীচরিত্র

Upadhyaya Gour Gobinda roy's Works

Sanskrit—

শ্রীমদ্গীতা সমন্বয়-ভাষ্য

বেদান্ত-সমন্বয়

গীতা-প্রপূর্ত্তি

নবসংহিতা

বিশ্বাস-বিবৃতি

Bengali—

আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র

উপাসনা প্রণালীর ব্যাখ্যা

শ্রীমদ্‌গীতা সমন্বয়-ভাষ্য
গীতা-প্রপূর্ত্তি (translated by Mahim Chandra Sen)
বেদান্ত-সমন্বয়
কেশবচন্দ্র (বক্তৃতা)
শ্রীকৃষ্ণের জীবন ও ধর্ম্ম
ধর্ম্মতত্ত্ব
শ্রীকৃষ্ণ চৈতন্য ও তাঁহার স্বভাবসিদ্ধ যোগ
Tracts—ক্ষুদ্র পুস্তিকা

TROILOKYA NATH SANYAL'S WORKS (চিরঞ্জীব শর্ম্মা)

কেশবচরিত
চিরঞ্জীব সঙ্গীতাবলী
বিধান ভারত
নববৃন্দাবন নাটক
ঈশাচরিতামৃত
ব্রাহ্মসমাজের ইতিবৃত্ত
ব্রহ্মগীতা
বিংশ শতাব্দী
ইহকাল পরকাল
পথের সম্বল
ভক্তি-চৈতন্য-চন্দ্রিকা

GIRISH CHANDRA SEN'S WORKS

কোরাণ
হদিস
মহম্মদ জীবনী

তাপসমালা

দরবেশ

হাসেন হোসেন

মহাপুরুষ মহম্মদ ও ইস্‌লাম ধর্ম্ম

MATI LAL DAS'S WORKS

কেশব সমাগম

কেশব কাহিনী

DWIJADAS DUTT'S WORKS

Behold the Man (Navavidhan and Sadharan Brahmo Samaj)

SADHU AGHORE NATH'S WORKS

শাক্যমুনি-চরিত

MAHENDRA NATH BASU'S WORKS

নানক-প্রকাশ

SASHI BHUSAN TALUKDAR'S WORKS

নবতত্ত্ব

হরিলীলা-রসামৃত-সিন্ধু

PROF. K. S. GHOSH'S WORKS

K. C. Sen and the New Reformation

Spiritual Outlook of the Age & K. C. Sen

DR. P. K. SEN'S WORKS

Keshub Chunder

DR. P. S. BASU'S WORKS

Keshub Chunder and his Work

KESHAB CHANDRA AND RAMKRISHNA

BY G. C. BANERJI

This book gives vivid pictures of these two great souls and the true history of the spiritual relationship that subsisted between them.

Marquis of Zetland says :—"This new account which you have written of these two men, will have, I hope, a large circulation."

Prof. S. L. Joshi, Head of the Department of Comparative Religion and Indian Philosophy, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H., says :—"..........I hasten to send you my hearty congratulations for the convincing manner in which you have written your book. I am particularly gratified that your respect for Paramhansa Ramkrishna has not in any way been affected in your endeavour to form a critical estimate of the splendid achievements of the great Keshab."

Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhusan says :—"It did a great service to the Brahmo Samaj by correcting the misrepresentations about the relations of these two devout souls."

Prof. Taraknath Sanyal, M.A., says :—"Your book is well written and its style is forcible and vigorous, and its criticism trenchant and just."

Prof. B. L. Anand of Lahore says :—"I marvel at your enthusiasm and admire it also for being able to write and publish such a good and instructive book in your green old age."

"The Indian Messenger," Calcutta, the Organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, says :—"It was the former (Keshab Chandra) who discovered the latter (Ramkrishna)

and made him known to the educated public. The meeting of the two was an event of great significance. But its significance has been misinterpreted by a school of thought in India......... So powerful is the propaganda of this party that a savant of Romain Rolland's stature has been misinformed and misled......... It was in fitness of things that the admirers of Keshab Chandra should protest against this one-sided view, and we make no apology to present our reader the following interesting correspondence (Romain Rolland's letter to the author of the book.)

"The Modern Review," Calcutta, says :—"The author has rendered unique service to the cause of truth by writing this letter.

"The Servant of India," Poona, says :—"The author has been led to write it at the age—he is more than seventy years old—when few people at least in India would think of doing it, had there been no great moral urge behind......... He has done his work, in a commendable spirit, and although he is a staunch follower of Keshab, his respect for Ramkrishna is as great as for his master."

———

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বিষয়নির্ঘণ্ট সূচী

মূল্য ছয় আনা

শ্রদ্ধেয় শ্রীযুক্ত সতীশচন্দ্র চক্রবর্ত্তী মহাশয়ের অভিমত :—

"আপনি যাহা করিতেছেন, তাহা শ্রদ্ধা ও পরিশ্রমের monument স্বরূপ। আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের সমস্ত লেখার এরূপ বিষয়সূচী একান্ত আবশ্যক ছিল। যদি লক্ষ লোকের মধ্যে একজন লোকও তাঁর উক্তি পাঠ করিতে পিপাসু থাকেন, এবং যদি সেই পাঠকের পক্ষে আপনার পরিশ্রম-প্রসূত বইখানি সহায় হয়, তাহাতেও আপনার উদ্যম সার্থক। পাঠকেরা সংখ্যায় অল্প বলিয়া বিশ্বাসী ও শ্রদ্ধাবান লেখক কখনও পরিশ্রম-বিমুখ হন না। আপনার এই বয়সে আপনি যাহা করিতেছেন, তাহা আমাদের সকলের সম্মুখে আদর্শরূপে বিরাজিত থাকুক।"

"*Navavidhan*" says :—"It is the Index to the utterances of Keshab (in Bengali) and his associates. The community of Navavidhan and the future generation will feel grateful to our respected elder Babu Gyanendra Chandra Banerji whose enthusiasm for helping the study of Keshab and Navavidhan literature has made possible such publications from time to time........."

চিরঞ্জীব সঙ্গীতাবলী

ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ সান্ন্যাল (চিরঞ্জীব শর্ম্মা) প্রণীত—

মূল্য দেড় টাকা।

মহামহোপাধ্যায় শ্রীপদ্মনাথ দেবশর্ম্মা (ভট্টাচার্য্য) বলেন :—

"৺ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ সান্ন্যাল মহাশয় একজন খ্যাতনামা ব্যক্তি ছিলেন। প্রায় পঞ্চাশ বৎসর পূর্ব্বে যখন শ্রীহট্ট সহরে অধ্যয়ন করিতাম—তখন ব্রাহ্মসমাজ.খুব 'পপুলার' ছিল, সর্ব্বসাধারণই ব্রহ্মসঙ্গীত ২।১টা শিখিয়া

:গাহিত। আপনি ইঁহার সঙ্গীতাবলী সাধারণ্যে প্রচার করিয়া ধন্য হইলেন। মুদ্রণ পরিপাটী, অতি সুন্দর হইয়াছে।"

* * * *

Navavidhan says :—"Babu Gyanendra Chandra Banerji of Gyan Kutir, Katra, Allahabad, has rendered a very valuable service by publishing the hymns and *kirtans* of Bhai Troilokya Nath Sanyal. It is a unique collection which includes over one thousand hymns and *kirtans* as found in Bhai Troilokya Nath's *Pather Sambal* and *Git-Ratnavali* (Four Parts) and has been very moderately priced at Re. 1-8 (paper cover) and Re. 1-12 (cloth)."

আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র

(উপাধ্যায় গৌরগোবিন্দ রায় প্রণীত)

শতবার্ষিকী সংস্করণ—২৩০২ পৃষ্ঠা, মূল্য ১০৲

আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের যাবতীয় জীবনের ঘটনা ও অন্যান্য কীর্ত্তিকলাপ ইহাতে বিশেষভাবে বর্ণিত হইয়াছে। বঙ্গভাষার অঙ্গ পূরণের জন্য ইহা একটি অমূল্য সম্পদ। এই গ্রন্থে কেবলমাত্র সত্য ও সঠিক বিবরণ লিপিবদ্ধ হওয়ায়, ইহার ঐতিহাসিক মূল্য অত্যন্ত অধিক।

এই সংস্করণে অতিরিক্ত শিরোনামা (Headlines) ও ফুটনোট, পাঠকদিগের প্রকৃত ব্যাপার বুঝিবার সুবিধার্থ ও ভবিষ্যতে সঠিক ইতিহাস লেখকদের গোচরার্থ কতকগুলি অত্যাবশ্যকীয় বিশেষ কথা পরিশিষ্টে দেওয়া হইয়াছে। তাহা ছাড়া পাঠকদিগের সুবিধার্থ প্রায় ২০০ পৃষ্ঠাব্যাপী একটি ব্যাপক বিষয়-সূচী সন্নিবিষ্ট হইয়া ইহার কার্য্যোপযোগিতা বর্দ্ধিত হইয়াছে।

Modern Review, প্রবাসী, আনন্দবাজার, Hindusthan Standard প্রভৃতিতে বিশেষভাবে প্রশংসিত।

ব্রহ্মগীতোপনিষৎ

(চতুর্থ সংস্করণ)

অর্থাৎ যোগ ও ভক্তিশিক্ষার্থী স্বর্গীয় সাধু অঘোরনাথ গুপ্ত, ভক্ত বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী (পরবর্ত্তী সময়ে জটিয়াবাবা) ও সেবা প্রভৃতি শিক্ষার্থীদের প্রতি "ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের" উপদেশ।

এই গ্রন্থখানি সাধনার্থীদিগের পক্ষে অমূল্য রত্ন। মূল্য ৸৹ (বার আনা)।

কেশবচন্দ্র ও বঙ্গসাহিত্য

শ্রীযোগেন্দ্রনাথ গুপ্ত প্রণীত

'দেশে'র অভিমত :—

'শিশুভারতী'-সম্পাদক শ্রীযোগেন্দ্রনাথ গুপ্ত মহাশয়ের পরিচয় অনাবশ্যক। বিক্রমপুরের ইতিহাস ও তাঁহার অন্যান্য গ্রন্থ বঙ্গসাহিত্যের একটি বিশিষ্ট স্থানে তাঁহাকে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়াছে।...'কেশবচন্দ্র ও বঙ্গসাহিত্য' যেন বহু আকাঙ্ক্ষিত বস্তুর ন্যায় আমাদের আনন্দবর্দ্ধন করিয়া বাঙলা সাহিত্য তথা ইতিহাস ও সমাজধর্ম্মের একটি বিশেষ অভাব পূরণ করিয়াছে।...গ্রন্থখানি বি, এ ও এম, এ ক্লাসের বাঙলা সাহিত্যে পাঠ্য-রূপে নির্ব্বাচিত হওয়ার যোগ্য।"

'আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা'র অভিমত :—

'কেশবচন্দ্রের বাঙলা রচনা যে কিরূপ ভাবগম্ভীর ও সরল ভাষায় লিখিত হইত, যদি তাহার কেহ পরিচয় চান, তাহা হইলে গ্রন্থস্থিত কেশব-চন্দ্রের রচনাসঞ্চয়ন হইতে কয়েকটি রচনা পাঠ করিতে অনুরোধ করি।... স্কুল ও কলেজের লাইব্রেরীতে এবং সাধারণ পাঠাগারে এই গ্রন্থের এক এক খণ্ড রাখা কর্ত্তব্য।"

"*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*" *says* :—"There is another reason why Mr. Gupta's book so attracts us. He is a Hindu and belongs, if we are not mistaken, to the orthodox fold. His book is a Hindu's appreciation of Keshab Chandra Sen's greatness. There is in it no suspicion of partnership. It is unprejudiced either way. He does not write in the shadow of Keshab's great personality. His offering is the offering of one who, wandering through the fair gardens of Bengali literature, finds himself, with delight and wonder, in a corner where there is a hermitage and a few *Sadhaks* but where ordinary travellers do not frequently go."

"*The Advance*" *says* :—"KESHAB CHANDRA O BANGA SAHITYA—is the best critical research work of our age and we have no hesitation in recommending it to the serious readers of Bengal. The get-up of the book is excellent."

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